DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 893 CS 511 870

AUTHOR	Linder, Patricia E., Ed.; Sampson, Mary Beth, Ed.; Dugan, Jo Ann R., Ed.; Brancato, Barrie, Ed.
TITLE	Celebrating the Faces of Literacy. The Twenty-Fourth Yearbook: A Peer Reviewed Publication of the College Reading Association, 2002. [Papers from the College Reading Association Conference, 2001].
INSTITUTION	College Reading Association.
ISBN	ISBN-1-883604-30-3
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	275p.; For the twenty-third yearbook, see ED 480 427.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC12 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Childrens Literature; Culturally Relevant Education; Elementary Secondary Education; *Literacy; Mexican American Literature; *Reading Instruction; Reading Research; Teacher Education; Yearbooks
IDENTIFIERS	College Reading Association; Teaching Research; Ukraine

ABSTRACT

The College Reading Association believes and values literacy education for all as one way to protect people's freedoms. This 24th Yearbook celebrates the varied "faces" of literacy. The yearbook contains the following special articles: (Presidential Address) "What Is Johnny Reading? A Research Update" (Maria Valerie Gold); (Keynote Addresses) "Effective Reading Instruction: What We Know, What We Need to Know, and What We Still Need to Do" (Timothy Rasinski); "Stories That Can Change the Way We Educate" (Patricia Edwards); (J. Estill Alexander Leaders' Forum Address) "What Research Reveals about Literacy Motivation" (Linda Gambrell); (Dissertation Award) "Effects of Three Organizational Structures on the Writing and Critical Thinking of Fifth Graders" (Suzanne A. Viscovich); and (Thesis Award) "Moving Adolescent Mothers and Their Children toward the Path of Educated Independence" (Joan Scott Curtis). "The Faces of Literacy Teachers" section contains these articles: "Comparing Career Choices and Expectations of Inservice and Preservice Teachers: A Case Survey" (Amy R. Hoffman and Evangeline V. Newton); "Learning to Use a Self-Assessment Instrument to Advance Reflection-Based Literacy Practice" (Linda S. Wold); "Preservice School Experiences Impact Literacy Staff Development of Inservice Teachers" (Jane Brady Matanzo and Eliah J. Watlington); and "Apples and Oranges: Teachers' Judgments of the Utility of Word Identification Software for Supporting Classroom Instruction" (Barbara J. Fox). "The Faces of Change" section contains these articles: "Literacy, Literature and Transdisciplinary Education: Collaborative Investigations in Apples, Bats, and the Democratic Process" (Mary Lou Morton and Nancy L. Williams); and "Implementing a Successful America Reads Challenge Tutoring Program: Lessons Learned" (Rita M. Bean; Katy Belski; Gregory H. Turner). "The Faces of Diverse Literacies" section contains these articles: "Literacy Possibilities and Concerns for Mexican-American Children's Literature: Readers, Writers, and Publishers Respond" (Janelle B. Mathis); "A Cultural Examination of the Functions of Literacy from a Contextual Setting in Western Ukraine" (I. La Verne Raine; Wayne M. Linek; Brenda Smith); and "Children's Literature as a Catalyst for

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

an EFL/ESL Writing Class" (Sabiha T. Aydelott). "The Faces of Children and Families" section contains these articles: "Using Play as a Context for Children's Acquisition of Phonemic Awareness" (Nicole Regush; Jim Anderson; Elizabeth A. Lee); and "Family Stories in K-3 Classrooms: Promoting Culturally Responsive Instruction" (Julie K. Kidd; Eva K. Thorp; Sylvia K. Sanchez). (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

Celebrating the Faces of Literacy

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Valeri-Bold

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

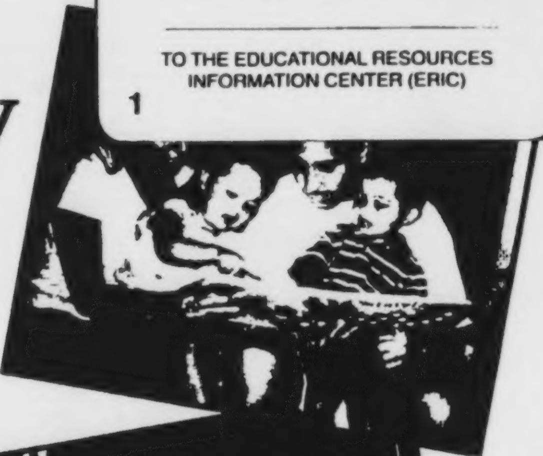
ED 482 893

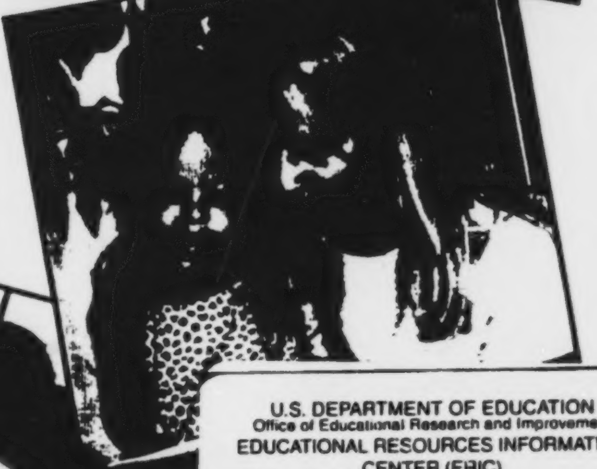
COLLEGE READING • TEACHER EDUCATION • CLINICAL • ADULT LEARNING • READING RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION

FOR A WORLD OF READING

CRA

THE
COLLEGE READING
ASSOCIATION





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Editors

Patricia E. Linder
Mary Beth Sampson
Jo Ann R. Dugan
Barrie Brancato

CS 511 870

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

Celebrating the Faces of Literacy

The Twenty-Third Yearbook
A Peer Reviewed Publication of
The College Reading Association
2002

Co-Editors
Patricia E. Linder
Mary Beth Sampson
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Jo Ann R. Dugan
Barrie Brancato
Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Editorial Assistants
Sujith K. Chithamur
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Leslie Gray
Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Copyright © 2002 The College Reading Association

Photocopy/reprint Permission Statement
Permission is hereby granted to professors and teachers to reprint or photocopy any article in the Yearbook for use in their classes, provided each copy made shows the copyright notice. Such copies may not be sold, and further distribution is expressly prohibited. Except as authorized above, prior written permission must be obtained from the College Reading Association to reproduce or transmit this work or portions thereof in any other form or by another electronic or mechanical means, including any information storage or retrieval system, unless expressly permitted by federal copyright law. Address inquiries to the College Reading Association, John Bertrand, 851 Lassiter Barker Rd., Readyville, TN 37149

ISBN 1-883604-30-3

Printed at Texas A&M University-Commerce

COLLEGE READING ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS 2001-2002

Executive Officers

President, Jane Matanzo, Florida Atlantic University
President-Elect, Robert Rickelman, University of North Carolina-Charlotte
Past President, Maria Valeri-Gold, Georgia State University
Executive Secretary, Linda Thistlethwaite, Western Illinois University
Treasurer/Business Manager, John E. Bertrand, Middle Tennessee State University

Directors

Karen Bromley, Binghamton University SUNY
Michael McKenna, Georgia Southern University
Laurie Elish-Piper, Northern Illinois University
Joan Elliott, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Caryn King, Grand Valley State University
Lillian Putnam, Kean College (Emerita)
Ellen Jampole, State University of New York-Cortland
Nancy Padak, Kent State University
Jack Cassidy, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Division Chairpersons

Teacher Education, Mona Matthews, Georgia State University
College Reading, Linda Saumell, University of Miami
Clinical, Connie Briggs, Emporia State University
Adult Learning, Bryan A. Bardine, University of Dayton

Editors/Co-Editors

Reading Research and Instruction, Robert Rickelman, University of North Carolina-Charlotte; Ernest Dishner, Penn State University-Harrisburg; William Henk, Penn State University-Harrisburg; Samuel Miller, University of North Carolina-Greensboro
Reading News, Ellen Jampole, State University of New York-Cortland
Literacy Cases Online, Barbara Walker, Oklahoma State University; Sandra Goetze, Oklahoma State University
CRA Yearbook, Patricia Linder, Texas A&M University-Commerce;
Mary Beth Sampson, Texas A&M University-Commerce;
Jo Ann Dugan, Clarion University;
Barrie Brancato, Clarion University

Committee and Commission Chairpersons

Conference/Research Focus

Conference Coordinator, Barbara Reinken, Grand Valley State University
Program, Robert Rickelman, University of North Carolina-Charlotte
Reading Room, Karen Bromley, Binghamton University SUNY; Linda Rogers, East Stroudsburg University
Exhibits, Naomi Feldman, Balwin-Wallace College; Lisa Henderson, Balwin-Wallace College
Elections, Jack Cassidy, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Awards, Maria Valeri-Gold, Georgia State University
Research, Evangeline Newton, University of Akron; Jacqueline Peck, Kent State University
Publications, Michael McKenna, Georgia Southern University

Organization Focus

Membership, Angela Ferree, Western Illinois University
Public Information, Marie F. Doan Holbein, State University of West Georgia; Donna Harkins, State University of West Georgia
Media, Nancy Bertrand, Middle Tennessee State University; Nancy A. Anderson, University of South Florida
Historian, Gary Shaffer, Middle Tennessee State University
Photographer, Frederick Fedorko, East Stroudsburg University
Professional Affairs, Richard F. Harlan, Piedmont College
Resolutions and Rules, William Dee Nichols, Virginia Tech; John Helfeldt, Texas A&M University
Legislative and Social Issues, Barbara Fox, North Carolina State University

Ad Hoc Committee

Technology, Marino Alvarez, Tennessee State University

CRA EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD 2001-2002

Jim Anderson, University of British Columbia
Dora L. Bailey, Youngstown State University
Frederick W. Bigenho, State University of New York-Potsdam
Beverly J. Boulware, Western Kentucky University
Tim Campbell, University of Central Oklahoma
Suzanne F. Clewell, Montgomery County Public Schools
Richard Culyer, Coker College
Marie F. Doan Holbein, State University of West Georgia
Laurie Elish-Piper, Northern Illinois University
Francine Falk-Ross, Northern Illinois University
Robbin Fillman, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Charlene Fleener, Old Dominion University
Anne R. Friedman, The City University of New York
Mary JoFresch, Ohio State University
Richard F. Harlan, Piedmont College
Linda Hughes, Stillman College
Ellen Jampole, State University of New York-Cortland
Jerry L. Johns, Northern Illinois University-Emeritus
Julie Kidd, George Mason University
James R. King, University of South Florida
Sherry Kragler, Ball State University
Alexandra G. Leavell, University of North Texas
Wayne M. Linek, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Lucia Y. Lu, Clark Atlanta University
Patricia Malinowski, Finger Lakes Community College
Michael A. Martin, University of Southern Mississippi
Sarah H. Martin, University of Southern Mississippi
Janelle B. Mathis, University of North Texas
Mona W. Matthews, Georgia State University
Karen E. Mayo, Stephen F. Austin State University
Leeann Moore, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Karen D. O'Donnell, Finger Lakes Community College
Monica Gordon Pershey, Cleveland State University
Michael J. Pickle, Indiana University South Blend
Nancy Padak, Kent State University
Diana J. Quatroche, Indiana State University
Mary E. Robbins, Sam Houston State University
Lynn Romeo, Monmouth University
Georganne Ross, Middle Tennessee State University
Barbara Kane Schneider, Grand Valley State University
Brenda Smith, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Toni K. Stiefer, Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Sandra M. Stokes, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Kathy Wellington, Metropolitan State University
Katherine D. Wiesendanger, Alfred University
Linda S. Wold, Purdue University-Calumet

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ix

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS **1**

What Is Johnny Reading? A Research Update
Maria Valerie Gold 2

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES **9**

Effective Reading Instruction: What We Know,
What We Need to Know, and What We Still Need to Do
Timothy Rasinski 10

Stories That Can Change the Way We Educate
Patricia Edwards 20

J. ESTILL ALEXANDER LEADERS' FORUM ADDRESS **31**

What Research Reveals About Literacy Motivation
Linda Gambrell 32

RESEARCH AWARDS **43**

The Effects of Three Organizational Structures
on the Writing and Critical Thinking of Fifth Graders
Dissertation Award, *Suzanne A. Viscovich* 44

Moving Adolescent Mothers and Their Children
Toward the Path of Educated Independence
Thesis Award, *Joan Scott Curtis* 68

THE FACES OF LITERACY TEACHERS **81**

Comparing Career Choices and Expectations
of Inservice and Preservice Teachers: A Case Survey
Amy R. Hoffman and Evangeline V. Newton 82

Learning to Use a Self-Assessment Instrument
to Advance Reflection-Based Literacy Practice
Linda S. Wold 97

8

Preservice School Experiences Impact
Literacy Staff Development of Inservice Teachers
Jane Brady Matanzo and Eliah j Watlington 116

Apples and Oranges: Teachers' Judgments
of the Utility of Word Identification Software
for Supporting Classroom Instruction
Barbara J. Fox 133

THE FACES OF CHANGE **150**

Literacy, Literature & Transdisciplinary Education:
Collaborative Investigations in Apples, Bats,
and the Democratic Process
Mary Lou Morton and Nancy L. Williams 151

Implementing a Successful America Reads
Challenge Tutoring Program: Lessons Learned
Rita M. Bean, Katy Belski, and Gregory H. Turner 169

THE FACES OF DIVERSE LITERACIES **188**

Literacy Possibilities and Concerns
for Mexican-American Children's Literature:
Readers, Writers, and Publishers Respond
Janelle B. Mathis 189

A Cultural Examination of the Functions
of Literacy from a Contextual Setting in Western Ukraine
I. La Verne Raine, Wayne M. Linek, and Brenda Smith 206

Children's Literature as a Catalyst for an EFL/ESL Writing Class
Sabiha T. Aydelott 222

THE FACES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES **233**

Using Play As a Context for Children's Acquisition
of Phonemic Awareness
Nicole Regush, Jim Anderson, and Elizabeth A. Lee 234

Family Stories in K-3 Classrooms: Promoting
Culturally Responsive Instruction
Julie K. Kidd, Eva K. Thorp, and Sylvia K. Sanchez 247

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It goes without saying that this volume would not be possible without the authors who devoted much energy and thought toward writing the articles presented here. We are especially grateful for the expertise of the Editorial Review Board members who make possible the review/selection of manuscripts and the CRA Publications Committee, which is chaired by Michael McKenna of Georgia Southern University. We are thankful for the unwavering commitment of the CRA Board of Directors who have supported the editorial team and the publication of the CRA Yearbook year after year.

We feel privileged to have had outstanding editorial assistants who attended to fine details and tracking of the manuscripts. We commend our graduate assistants Sujith K. Chithamur at Texas A&M University-Commerce; and Leslie Gray at Clarion University, for their hard work and the long hours they spent reading manuscripts, communicating with reviewers, and communicating with authors. We also appreciate the clerical support provided by our secretarial staff, Frances Norman and Jan Hazelip, at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Finally, we thank Vivian Freeman and Lyndal Burnett, at Texas A&M University-Commerce, for facilitating the printing and production of the Yearbook.

We are eternally grateful for the extensive support provided by our universities. At Texas A&M University-Commerce, we thank President Keith McFarland, Provost and Academic Vice President Finnie Murray, and Dean Jerry Hutton for ongoing financial assistance. We also extend a warm thanks to faculty in the Department of Elementary Education for supporting the publication. At Clarion University of Pennsylvania, we thank President Diane L. Reinhard and Dean Gail Grejda, for supporting the Yearbook.

We also extend a heartfelt thanks to our families, colleagues, friends, and readers who have supported our professional efforts with encouragement, acknowledgement, and genuine interest. Thanks also to our children and grandchildren who supplied the faces of literacy. Finally we dedicate this yearbook to the late Jeanette Veach, who served as an early leader in literacy.

PEL, MBS, JRD, & BAB
November, 2002

INTRODUCTION:
CELEBRATING THE FACES OF LITERACY

September 11, 2001 changed all of us forever. The good that came from being so shocked and saddened over the events of that day was to reexamine our values. This examination caused many of us to reaffirm what we have valued all along. Such is true for The College Reading Association. We believe and value literacy education for all as one way to protect our freedoms. We continue to celebrate all the facets of literacy.

In the twenty-third volume, we celebrated the voices of literacy. They were many and varied. We celebrated the voice of Estill Alexander who now continues to inspire us all through the voices of his colleagues and students. In the twenty-fourth volume we continue to celebrate literacy—this time the *faces* of literacy. We hope you enjoy seeing what literacy looks like in the varied faces of this volume.

Our president looked at the faces of children and adolescents choosing what they want to read. Maria also showed us how we as literacy teachers can provide them with reading that interests our students. All three keynote speakers looked at the faces of literacy in the past, the present, and the future. Tim Rasinski gave us a glimpse of what we have learned and where we stand as an organization of literacy expert "tweeners" who have the power to bridge the gap between research and application. Pat Edwards showed us her personal literacy journey and the path she leads into the future for children and their families. And finally Linda Gambrell showed us how motivation for learning to read looks and how we can best foster love of reading for it own sake.

Our award winners showed us glimpse of faces of literacy in school and at home. The dissertation winner showed us how we can restructure our writing instruction for children while our thesis winner showed us the faces of teenage mothers learning how to read to their very young children.

Many of us teach preservice and inservice teachers. It seemed appropriate that the faces of literacy teacher educators are represented in this Yearbook. Preparing tomorrow's literacy teachers and providing on-going support for those who teach children is such a complex task. We hope you will be inspired to consider the topics—staff development, teacher satisfaction, software selection, and promoting reflective practice—that were addressed in this volume when you design your instruction for teachers.

What would we do without the voices of those who evaluate what has been done and suggest ways to make literacy learning better? It is likely we would not reassess what we do, change it and grow. Therefore, we are pleased that these voices are given a face in this Yearbook of the College Reading Association.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Some faces appearing in this Yearbook are different from the traditional faces of literacy we are so accustomed to seeing. How literacy is learned and perceived is the same, yet quite different, in some parts of the world. Please take a few minutes to see the faces of literacy in the Ukraine, in Egypt, and among Hispanic children in our own land.

Finally, please see the faces of all the children and their families as you read about including the family experiences to improve literacy instruction. Also see the faces of children who use play to learn about language.

This twenty-fourth volume of the College Reading Association Yearbook may not be an exhaustive view of all the faces of literacy. But it is a good view of the faces which we "tweeners" want to serve. It is our hope that by viewing these faces, you will indeed be inspired to carry on the mantel of doing the very best we can so that all can learn and love reading and writing. It is also our wish that these faces will encourage you to celebrate all their accomplishments.

PEL, MBS, JRD, & BAB
November, 2002

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHAT IS JOHNNY READING? A RESEARCH UPDATE

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Maria Valeri-Gold

George State University

I will begin my talk this morning with a quote taken from the writer, Janet Ruth Falon (2001), in her article titled *Life Among the Debris.*

> A book, as a physical object,
> develops a life of its own,
> one other than a story written
> on its pages.
> We read books as we
> experience the story
> of our lives . . .

We teach many readers who approach books as Falon has described in this quote. What draws readers to these physical objects? Why do readers choose books that appear to develop a life of their own? What books are they selecting? How do these books affect them? As a lifelong reader and as a college educator who teaches at-risk learners, I understand the importance of reading interest and its effect on reading attitude, reading behavior, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and reading comprehension. I have incorporated literature as a positive catalyst to motivate my reluctant college readers to read and to create that literary spark to help them develop an interest in reading.

I will present to you this morning a brief research update on the reading interests of elementary, middle, junior-high, high school, college at-risk students, and mature adults.

The assessment of readers' reading interests has been well documented since 1889 (Weintraub, 1987), and researchers have continued to investigate the reading preferences of readers using a variety of data-gathering materials, such as open-ended questions and responses, Likert scaled survey instruments, reading logs, and journals (Monson & Sebesta, 1991).

During the past decade, numerous research studies have been conducted that examine the reading interests of elementary, middle, junior-high, and high school students (Beck, Bargiel, Koblitz, O'Connor, Pierce, & Wolf, 1998; Belden & Beckman, 1991; Cope, 1997; Diaz-Rubin, 1996; Fisher & Ayres, 1990; Fox, 1996; Fronius, 1993; Isaacs, 1992; Johns & Davis, 1990; Jordan, 1997; Laumbach, 1995; Lewis & Mayes, 1998; Richards, Thatcher, Shreeves, & Timmons, 1999; Rinehart, Gerlach, Wisell, & Welker, 1998; Simpson, 1996; Snellman, 1993; Sullivan & Donoho, 1994; Weiss, 1998; Worthy, 1996; Wray & Lewis, 1993). Yet, a limited number of research studies have been conducted to investigate the reading interests of college at-risk students (Blackwood, Flowers, Rogers, & Staik, 1991; Gallik, 1999; Jeffres & Atkin, 1996; Martinez & Nash, 1997; McCreath, 1975; Schraw, Flowerday, & Reisetter, 1998; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 1994) and mature adults (Black, 1998; Gourlie, 1996) in the last ten years.

Other research studies have examined how physical characteristics (visual appeal, size), age, grade level, reading ability, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, reading attitude, reading habits, book choice, assigned reading, income, and gender play a significant role in determining the reading interests of students in varying grade levels (Cherland, 1994; Cope, 1997; Kincade & Kleine, 1993; Ley, 1994; Reutzel & Gali, 1998; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Worthy, 1996; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999).

Additional studies have investigated the role of realistic fiction books focusing on societal issues, such as prejudice, racism, cults, child abuse, peer pressure, self-esteem, family struggles, violence, crime, rape, death, alcohol, and drugs, and their impact on reading interests (Weiss, 1998). These books discuss controversial problems that are realistic portrayals of readers' issues and their lives, and they can help students cope and solve their personal, social, and academic concerns in the real world.

Other investigations examine how self-selection, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, peer relationships, and teacher interest influence reading interests rather than the school's media center, school collections, and libraries (Worthy et al., 1999).

After reviewing the literature, I noted that the majority of students from elementary through college grade levels enjoy listening to stories and reading books (Richards et al., 1999), and they also find pleasure in reading "light materials" such as comics and magazines (Worthy et al., 1999). Regardless of grade level; however, both females and males preferred fiction over nonfiction; females preferred fiction more strongly than males; males preferred male main characters more strongly than females; and females preferred female main characters more than the males (Segel, 1986). Simpson (1996) found that females read more, while males read less. Fox (1996) noted that students read more than they are generally believed to read, but their reading interests are not often tapped in school. Overall, the majority of students want books that they can read, relate to, think about, discuss, and write about (Harkrader & Moore, 1997).

I will present the reading interests of students by grade levels, ages, and categories. It should be noted, however, that the changes found in students' reading interests as they grow older are well documented (Wigfield & Asher, 1984). Methods of assessing readers' reading interests and the use of different populations, terminology, and data collecting methods can also affect the various reading categories. In addition, categories may represent a mixture of genre, theme, and topic and may be too broad to pinpoint students' reading interests (Monson et al., 1991).

Elementary school readers (ages-5-8) were interested in reading the following types of books: 1) picture books, 2) animals, 3) scary books /mystery/suspense/horror, 4) humor/riddles/jokes, 5) media (television/movies), and 6) adventure.

Preadolescent readers (middle and junior high school students) (ages 9-13) reported that they were interested in reading these types of books: 1) horror, 2) humor, 3) mystery, 4) historical fiction, 5) adventure, 6) science fiction/fantasy, 7) animals, 8) media (television/movies, 9) realistic fiction, and 10) magazines (video games, teen magazines).

Higginbotham's study (1999) conducted with middle school readers (ages 9-11) noted that females reported an interest in romance, friendship, animal stories, adventure, and historical fiction; while the males reported preferences for sports and science. The results also indicated that males had a stronger preference for non-fiction than did the females.

An earlier study conducted by Fisher and Ayres (1990) compared the reading interests of children between the ages of 8 and 11 years old in England and in the United States is noteworthy. The rank order of mean scores by country is as follows:

England	*United States*
1. Jokes	1. Jokes
2. Mystery	2. Mystery
3. Adventure	3. Crafts
4. Crafts	4. Adventure
5. Animals	5. Animals
6. Sports	6. Science
7. Fairytales	7. Sports
8. Science	8. Fairytales
9. Poetry	9. Poetry
10. History	10. History
11. Biographies	11. Biographies

The top 10 areas of interest for high school students (ages 14-17) are the following (Diaz-Rubin, 1996): 1) adventure, 2) horror, 3) mystery, 4) humor, 5) murder, 6) love, 7) fantasy, 8) crime, 9) sports, and 10) media (television/movies).

The reading interests of college at-risk students (Blackwood et al., 1991; Gallik, 1999; Jeffres & Atkin, 1996; Nelson, 1989) are: 1) newspapers, 2) magazines, 3) comic books, 4) poetry, 5) letters/e-mail/chat rooms, 6) Internet, 7) novels, 8) fiction, 9) non-fiction, and 10) media (television/movies).

Black's (1998) study conducted with mature adults indicated the following interests according to genre and preferences:

Fiction Preferences for Women	*Non-fiction Preferences for Women*
1. Romance	1. Biography
2. Mystery	2. History
3. Historical fiction	3. Travel

Fiction Preferences for Men	*Non-fiction Preferences for Men*
1. Western fiction	1. Travel
2. Mystery	2. Fine Arts
3. Historical fiction and Romance	3. Biography

I would like to recommend three books written by Kathleen Odean for future reference. One book is titled *Great Books about Things Kids Love* (Odean, 2001), and two earlier guides titled *Great Books for Girls* (1997) and *Great Books for Boys* (1998). *Great Books about Things Kids Love* (Odean, 2001) describes over 750 books recommended for ages three to fourteen that are arranged by high interest subjects such as ghosts, computers, robots, insects, and disasters. *Great Books for Girls* (Odean, 1997) contains more than 600 books recommended for girls three to fourteen, and *Great Books for Boys* (1998) has more than 600 books for boys aged two to fourteen.

I will end my presentation with a quote written by the writer Charlotte Gray. This quote was found in Glaspey's (1998) book titled *A Passion for Books:*

> *Books become as familiar and necessary as old friends. Each change in them, brought about by much handling and by accident only endears them more. They are an extension of oneself.*

Educational Resources for Selecting Books

Recommended websites for selecting books:

Award Winning Children's Books
http://awardbooks.hypemart.net/
Bibliotherapy
http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/ieo/digests/d82.html
The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb/
Horn Book Magazine www.hbook.com
Book Links www.ala.org/BookLinks/
Book: The Magazine for the Reading Life bookmagazine.com
Children's Literature Web Guide from the University of Calgary
www.acs.calgary.ca/~dkbrown/
Fairrossa Cyber Library of Children's Literature
www.dalton.org/libraries/fairrosa/
American Library Association
www.ala.org
International Reading Association
http://www.reading.org./choices/tc2000.html
http://www.reading.org./choices/cc2000.html
HtmlResAnchor http://www.reading.org./choices/yac2000.html
Takoma Park Maryland Library—Middle School and High School Students
Selected Resources-Books, Magazines, Websites
HtmlResAnchor http://cityoftakomapark.org/library/ya/midbook.html

Recommended websites for renting audio books:

Recorded Books www.recordedbooks.com
Books on Tape www.booksontape.com
Blackstone Books HtmlResAnchor www.blackstoneaudio.com

Recommended reference books for selecting children's books that are arranged and indexed by subject.

Cavanaugh, M., Freeman, J., Jones, B., & Rivlin, H. (Eds.). (2000). *The Barnes and Noble guide to children's books.* New York: Barnes & Noble.

Gillespie, J. T., & Naden, C. J. (Eds.). (1998). *Best books for children: Preschool through grade 6* (6th ed.). New York: Bowker.

Homa, L. L. (Ed.). (2000). *Elementary school library collection* (22nd ed.). New York: Brodart.

Lima, C. W., & Lima, J. A. (1998). *A to Zoo: Subject access to children's picture books* (5th ed.). New York: Bowker.

Lipson, F. R. (Ed.). (2000). *The New York Times parent's guide to the best books for children* (3rd ed.). New York: Three Rivers Press.

Rand, D., Parker, T. T., & Foster, S. (1998). *Black books galore: Guide to great African American children's books.* New York: John Wiley.

References

Beck, C., Bargiel, S., Koblitz, D., O'Connor, A., Pierce, K. M., & Wolf, S. (1998). Books for summer reading (Talking about books). *Language Arts, 75,* 320-328.

Belden, E. A., & Beckman, J. M. (1991). Finding new harmony, then and now: Young women's rites of passage (Books for the teenage reader). *English Journal, 80,* 84-86.

Black, B. A. (1998). *Outreach services for older adults at the Wadsworth Public Library.* Unpublished master's research paper, Kent State University, Ohio.

Blackwood, C., Flowers, S. S., Rogers, J. S., & Staik, I. M. (1991, November). *Pleasure reading by college students: Fact or fiction?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-Southern Educational Research Association Conference, Lexington, KY.

Cherland, M. (1994). Untangling gender: Children, fiction, and useful theory. *New Advocate, 7,* 253-264.

Cope, J. (1997). Beyond "voices of readers": Students on school's effects on reading. *English Journal, 86,* 18-23.

Diaz-Rubin, R. C. (1996). Reading interests of high school students. *Reading Improvement, 33,* 169-175.

Falon, J. R. (2001, May/June). Life among the debris. *Book: The Magazine for the Reading Life* (p. 92). New York: West Egg Communications.

Fisher, P. J. L., & Ayres, G. (1990). A comparison of the reading interests of children in English and the United States. *Reading Improvement, 27,* 111-115.

Fox, D. L. (1996). Learning to teach through inquiry (New teachers). *English Journal, 85,* 114-117.

Fronius, S. K. (1993). *Reading interests of young adults in Medina County, Ohio.* Unpublished master's research paper, Kent State University, Ohio.

Gallik, J. D. (1999). Do you read for pleasure? Recreational reading habits of college students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 42,* 480-489.

Glaspey, T. W. (1998). *A passion for books.* Eugene, OR: Harvest House.

Gourlie, S. K. (1996). *Reading interests in older adult public library users.* Unpublished master's thesis, Kent State University, Ohio.

Harkrader, M. A., & Moore, R. (1997). Literature preferences of fourth graders. *Reading Research and Instruction, 36,* 325-339.

Higginbotham, S. (1999). *Reading interests of middle school students and reading preferences by gender of middle school students in a southeastern state.* Unpublished master's thesis, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia.

Isaacs, K. T. (1992). "Go ask Alice": What middle schoolers choose to read. *New Advocate, 5,* 129-143.

Jeffres, L. W., & Atkin, D. J. (1996). Dimensions of student interest in reading newspapers. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, 51,* 15-23.

Johns, J., & Davis, S. J. (1990). Reading interests of middle school students. *Ohio Reading Teacher, 24,* 47-50.

Jordan, A. D. (1997). Space, the final frontier: Books on space and space exploration. *Teaching and Learning Literature with Children and Young Adults, 7,* 15-26.

Kincade, K. M., & Kleine, P. F. (1993). Methodological issues in the assessment of children's reading interests. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 20,* 224-237.

Laumbach, B. (1995). Reading interests of rural bilingual children. *Rural Educator, 16,* 12-14.

Lewis, V. V., & Mayes, W. M. (1998). *Valerie & Walter's best books for children: Lively, opinionated guide.* New York: Avon.

Ley, T. C. (1994). Longitudinal study of the reading attitudes and behaviors of middle school students. *Reading Psychology, 15,* 11-38.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Martinez, M., & Nash. M. F. Heroes and heroines. *Language Arts, 74*, 50-56.

McCreath, E. E. (1975). An investigation of reading habits, reading interests, and their relationship to reading improvement of students in an urban open door junior college. In G. McNinch & W. Miller (Eds.), *Reading: Convention and inquiry* (pp. 100-106). Clemson, S. C.: National Reading Conference.

Monson, D. L., & Sebesta, S. (1991). Reading preferences. In J. Flood, J. Jensen, D. Lapp, & J. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in Teaching the Language Arts* (pp. 664-673). New York: Macmillan.

Nelson, R. L. (1989, October). *College students' views of reading*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Great Lakes Regional Reading Association, Cincinnati, OH.

Odean, K. (1997). Great *books for girls*. New York: Ballantine.

Odean, K. (1998). *Great books for boys*. New York: Ballantine.

Odean, K. (2001). *Great books about things kids love*. New York: Ballantine.

Reading Today. (June/July, 2001).*Reading remains popular among youths, according to polls*, p. 13.

Reutzel, D. R., & Gali, K. (1998). The art of children's book selection: A labyrinth unexplored. *Reading Psychology, 19*, 3-50.

Richards, P. O., Thatcher, D. H., Shreeves, M., & Timmons, P. (1999). Don't let a good scare frighten you: Choosing and using quality chillers to promote reading. *Reading Teacher, 52*, 830-840.

Rinehart, S. D., Gerlach, J. M., Wisell, D. L., & Welker, W. A. (1998). Would I like to read this book?: Eighth graders' use of book cover choices to help choose recreational reading. *Reading Research and Instruction, 37*, 263-279.

Schraw, G., Flowerday, T., & Reisetter, M. F. (1998). The role of choice in reader engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*, 705-714.

Segel, E. (1986). As the twig is bent . . .: Gender and childhood reading. In E. Flynn & P. Schweickart (Eds.), Gender *and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts* (pp. 165-186). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Sheorey, R., & Mokhtari, K. (1994). The reading habits of college students at different levels of reading proficiency. *Reading Improvement, 31*, 351-362.

Simpson, A. (1996). Fictions and facts: An investigation of the reading practices of girls and boys. *English Education, 28*, 268-279.

Snellman, L. M. (1993). *Sixth grade reading interests: A survey*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 415)

Sullivan, E. P., & Donoho, G. E. (1994, November). *Reading interests of gifted secondary school writers*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Nashville, TN.

Weintraub, S. (1987). Two significant trends in reading research. In H. A. Robinson (Ed.), *Reading and Writing Instruction in the United States: Historical Trends* (pp. 59-68). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Weiss, M. J. (1998). Potpourri (The Publisher's Connection). *ALAN Review, 26*, 40-41.

Wigfield, A., & Asher, S. R. (1984). Social and motivational influences on reading. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (pp. 423-452). New York: Longman.

Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J. T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breath of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*, 420-432.

Worthy, J. (1996). A matter of interest: Literature that hooks reluctant readers and keeps them reading. *Reading Teacher, 50*, 204-212.

Worthy, J., Moorman, M., & Turner, M. (1999). What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school. *Reading Research Quarterly, 34*, 12-27.

Wray, D., & Lewis, M. (1993). The reading experiences and interests of junior school children. *Children's Literature in Education, 24*, 252-263.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION: WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW, AND WHAT WE STILL NEED TO DO

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Timothy Rasinski

Kent State University

Timothy Rasinski is a professor of education in the Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies. Dr. Rasinski teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in literacy education. His major interests include working with children who find reading difficult, phonics and reading fluency instruction, and teacher development in literacy education. He has published over 100 articles and 10 books on various aspects of reading education.

A past editor of The Reading Teacher, *the most widely read journal in reading education in the world, Dr. Rasinski is currently an editor for the* Journal of Literary Research. *Rasinski has served as president of the College Reading Association and he currently serves on the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association. He earned bachelor degrees in economics and education at the University of Akron and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His master's degree in special education also comes from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Dr. Rasinski was awarded the Ph.D. from The Ohio State University.*

It's not often that I am offered the opportunity to act as an expert in front of my own colleagues and given freedom to espouse my own beliefs about how the world should be. But when those opportunities do come along I relish them because they allow me, or should I say force me, to move outside the narrow and confined world I live in and think more freely and expansively about how an ideal world might look. In this case the world I refer to is the world of reading, and in particular the world of reading instruction.

What We Know

We do know a lot about reading and how reading instruction can be most effective–for struggling readers and for all readers. Despite the criticism aimed at it, I think the National Reading Panel (2000) did identify some critical components of literacy learning that need to be addressed in any effective reading curriculum and program for the primary grades—phonemic awareness, phonics or word study, reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, teacher development, and technology. I think we can all agree that these areas do have the potential to impact children's development as readers. From my perspective as a reading clinician, I find children coming into our reading clinic usually are impeded in their reading development by one or more of these concerns—decoding, lack of fluency, inadequate vocabulary and background, passive approaches to constructing meaning. Intensive, engaging, authentic, and regular instruction in those areas of concern usually results in generalized improvement in reading.

Unfortunately the National Reading Panel did not specifically endorse reading itself as a key provision in successful reading programs. I am among many others who feel that this is a gross oversight. Although there may not be a sufficient number of experimental studies that have demonstrated the effects of student reading on reading development and achievement, there is a solid theoretical basis for reading as a necessary condition for improving reading achievement and a number of correlational studies that have demonstrated fairly convincingly that you cannot become a good reader without widely and regularly reading. All of the recent National Assessment of Educational Progress studies (e.g., Donahue, et al., 1999) as well as the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement study (Postlethwaite & Ross, 1992) have found that reading achievement is closely connected to the amount of reading students do.

If we accept the idea that reading volume is critical to reading achievement, then motivation for reading must also be recognized as a key factor for success in teaching reading. Certainly, two major characteristics of struggling readers are their lack of reading and their lack of motivation for reading.

I think we have also come to the conclusion that balanced and integrative reading instruction is a key to success. You just can't teach phonics, and you just can't teach in literature study groups. Students need it all, delivered in a regular, intense, and engaging manner.

Our current understanding of reading has also lead us to a recognition of the importance of early reading intervention. The best time to correct a problem in reading is as early as possible. This not only means early intervention such as Reading Recovery and other such programs, it also means early detection of reading difficulties, which can be a tough sell to parents or teachers who don't wish to burden their child with a label so early in their lives. Nevertheless, when effective early identification and intervention occur, children are more likely to be successful in the long run.

So these are some of the known in our field–what is truly important in teaching reading:

- Volume of reading and volume of reading instruction.
- Motivating students to read more.
- Early assessment and intervention (as well as instruction in phonemic awareness)
- Instruction in phonics and decoding
- Instruction in reading fluency
- Instruction in vocabulary
- Instruction in comprehension.

To be perfectly honest, the list offered above provides little in the way of new or unusual information. Reading educators and scholars have been aware of these issues for decades. Nevertheless, it is always wise to affirm for ourselves from time to time what is known in the way of effective instruction for children.

What We Need to Know and Do

I'd like to switch now to the second and more speculative part of my title—what is it that we don't know about effective reading instruction, what is it that we don't know enough about, and what is it that we wonder about? This is my chance to speculate about reading–what questions do we need answers to in order to make reading instruction more effective for all students, especially those who struggle so much in learning to become literate.

For the large part, my questions and wonderings revolve not so much around the big ticket items that we seem to reaffirm for ourselves over and over again, but more about the nitty gritty items within those big pictures–we know phonics is important, for example, but we still need to how to make phonics instruction work successfully for students. This is a question that needs to be answered through classroom-based, in-the-trenches research, or as we say in my hometown, Akron, where the rubber meets the road. This is where we often find our work being co-opted by others–others who are not guided so much by the well-being of students, but by the quick buck, the easy fix, the one-size-fits-all type program developed by people whose knowledge of readers and reading instruction is limited at best.

Science and Art of Reading Instruction

It is in this gulf between theory and research and actual practice that the science of literacy instruction must make room for the art and poetry of literacy instruction. It is where I find myself situated professionally and it is where I find so many of my College Reading Association (CRA) colleagues situated. More than most other professional literacy organizations, I believe, the College Reading Association and its members work to make those theoretical constructs and those grand research results come to life in the classrooms of teachers and in the lives of kids–especially kids who struggle in reading.

One of the big ideas in literacy education that we have known for a long time is the importance of time—instructional time and time engaged in authentic reading. Theoretical models of reading and research into reading achievement have noted that time is truly important. But the theories and research offer little in ways that time for reading and reading instruction can indeed be maximized. We need to find ways to maximize time—how can this actually be done?

Expanding Literacy Instruction at Home and in the Community

The home–if the school day is filled to capacity, we need to think about getting parents and families more involved in the reading program. The little known Even Start (ES) programs offer wonderful example of trying to increase achievement through family involvement. Nancy Padak and other CRA members have reported numerous times at this conference about family literacy programs, especially Even Start. In ES programs, parents of young children who are working on their GEDs and improving their literacy skills for themselves are given assistance in helping their own preschool and early childhood children move toward literacy development.

The Fast Start program that I have reported on at previous CRA meetings provides parents of kindergarten and first grade children with materials and specific and proven methods for helping their children get off to a solid and early start in their reading. Parents are asked to spend no more than 15 minutes per day reading to, reading with, and listening to their children read short poems and then engaging in a few word games and activities.

Bruce Stevenson's (2001) recently completed dissertation at The Ohio State University found that a three-month implementation Fast Start had a profound and positive effect on children identified as most at risk. Regular use of Fast Start by parents resulted in gains in reading achievement that approached an effect size of approximately two standard deviations over a control group of similar children not in the Fast Start program. Imagine the possibilities if children had the opportunity to engage in Fast Start for their entire kindergarten and first grade years?

Consider the role of the community in expanding time for reading. Susan Neumann spoke at this very conference four years ago in Boston to inform us of ways that communities, even in the most impoverished parts of large urban areas, can be empowered to deliver powerful and caring instruction and opportunities to read for children.

Expanding Literacy Instruction in the School

Consider the role of the school and teachers in expanding reading instruction. Is it possible to change the nature of schooling to increase instruction? I think it is possible, but we need to go beyond the simple solutions of lengthening the school day or the school year. Belinda Zimmerman and her colleague Tracy Foreman reported at this conference a few years ago about their Reading Workshop Program (Zimmerman, Foreman, & Rasinski, 1996). Belinda and Tracy are first grade teachers who were able to expand the school day for their most at-risk children by extending the school day by 45 minutes three days per week for the lowest quartile of students in their classrooms. Each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday they would begin their school day 45 minutes before the beginning bell and provide the four or five lowest students in their classrooms with intensive and direct instruction on reading that correlated perfectly with what they were teaching in reading during the regular school day.

Zimmerman et al. (1996) found that the students they worked with made greater gains than children who were receiving Title I assistance. Moreover, they found anecdotally that the children who went through their morning workshop programs were doing very well in their subsequent grade levels. It has always been a mystery why their local school district was unwilling or unable to support these two innovative teachers in the remarkable and groundbreaking work they were doing or to expand the program to other classrooms.

We viewed another approach to maximize instructional time in school just this past year in the primary grades in Tallmadge, Ohio. This school system had adopted a guided reading approach to literacy instruction–small groups of children met with their teacher for approximately 20 minutes per day for direct instruction in reading. One of the problems with this approach has always been what do the other students do while the teacher works with the one group. In many cases the other students are given assignments by their teachers to do independently, but are more often than not off task during this time, engaged minimally in productive reading behavior.

The Tallmadge school system overcame this problem with what they called their reading SWAT teams or Circle Reading Program. During the 30 minutes or so that a teacher had allotted for guided reading, her room would be "invaded" by the school reading coordinator, the Title I teacher, and a couple of trained reading tutors or instructional assistants. Each adult would work with 4-5 students in her or his assigned group for the entire 30 minute period. Thus each child had a maximum amount of direct guided reading instruction in small groups for a total of 30 minutes per day and the teacher still had another 90 minutes remaining for self-selected reading, writing, word study, and other literacy based instructional activities.

These are but a few examples of instructional innovations that are actual elaborations of the more general theories and research into reading. This is the kind of research that is really needed to move our field forward. We already know what the big ideas are. Our next step is to find and document ways to flesh out those big ideas in the lives of teachers and students.

Phonics Yes, But What Kind of Phonics?

In a similar vein, it is well known that instruction that focuses on words, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension is essential to reading success. The National Reading Panel has told us this. But the equally important question we are left with is what does effective instruction in these areas look like? The National Reading Panel, for example, found that phonics instruction was important, but it was unable to indicate if a particular form or approach to phonics instruction was more effective than another.

If we don't show teachers and teachers-in-training specific and effective ways to develop instruction in phonics or other key areas of literacy instruction, others will. Indeed our history as a profession is replete with examples of "educational gurus" who often come from fields unrelated to education with some "guaranteed" instructional approach that is touted to be effective but that is based on little research and even smaller amounts of classroom and clinical application. Such programs are, at best, questionable in their approach and effectiveness and, at worst, actually harmful to students development.

Again, I think this area of bringing life to the general theories, principles, and research into literacy is where College Reading Association members flourish. Let me offer one more personal example. Ruth Oswald and myself (Oswald & Rasinski, 2001) have reported at CRA meetings our work with a word decoding activity called Making and Writing Words, an elaboration of Cunningham and Cunningham's (1992) Making Words. Implementing this approach in Ruth's second grade classroom over two years, we found substantive and significant improvements in students' ability to decode words when compared with more traditional approaches to word study. The big theory (e.g. National Reading Panel, 2000) tells us that phonics and decoding instruction are important. Our research indicates that Making and Writing Words appears to be one effective approach for fleshing out and bringing to life phonics and decoding instruction in real classrooms.

Just What is Guided Reading?

Let me offer a few other big ideas that need fleshing out. Comprehension instruction has been identified as by the National Reading Panel as a critical ingredient in successful literacy education programs. In many schools the comprehension portion of the curriculum has been translated into guided reading.

In my work with schools over the past several years, I have discovered that there is a great deal of confusion in what is meant by guided reading. Some schools adhere to the Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1998) approach to guided reading. Others have Fountas and Pinnell (1996) in mind when speaking of guided reading. Still others refer to Opitz and Ford's (2001) conception of guided reading. In many schools comprehension instruction has been reduced to a few models of implementation. Is there any of these models that are more effective than any other? Is there evidence that these models are more effective than other models that are developed by well-informed teachers developing their own form of comprehension instruction? These are the types of questions that need to be asked and answered. Certainly, comprehension instruction is important, but what does effective comprehension instruction look like and how is it actually implemented in classrooms?

Questions About Assessment

In terms of instructional reading level, it is well known that we learn best when the learning task presented before us is challenging but not frustrating. Too hard and we give up, get frustrated, and learn to avoid a particular task. Too easy and we simply cover what we already know and learning is less than optimized. One of our tasks as reading educators is trying to find that material that is "just right" or as Vygotsky might call it–the Zone of Proximal Development. Do we know how to determine instructional level in children? We have some idea by using information such as decoding accuracy and comprehension.

But where does fluency fit in in the mix of determining instructional level? Are there good standards for determining instructional level based on fluency norms? Can 6 to 10 questions per passage in an IRI provide an adequate and valid measure of comprehension? What about quality of miscues students make while reading in determining instructional level? Where does self-efficacy fit into the determination of instructional level?

Even the concept of instructional reading level is getting muddied. Not long ago I saw a report of a standardized reading test that gave results in terms of reading grade level, instructional grade level, and ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) grade level? I had thought these were essentially the same concept, but this particular test gave three different scores. What is a teacher to do with these scores? Here's another example, I think, of a test maker benefiting commercially by misinterpreting important ideas and, in the long run, making things less clear and less easy for all of us.

The reason we are so interested in readers' instructional level is so that we can match the reader to an appropriate text. This requires an ability to estimate the reader's reading level *and* the reading level of the text to be read. But do we really have a good handle on that big idea called readability? Are we truly able to provide good clear estimates of reading difficulty based on a comprehensive range of factors beyond word and syntax? What we seemed to have gotten in recent years is a much less clear picture of readability with the addition of other concepts such as lexile scores, reading recovery levels, Fountas and Pinnell levels, and other material leveling systems.

We all know that continuous assessment and diagnosis is important. But how do we do it? Can we assess validly and in ways that minimize valuable time that should be used for instruction? I think approaches like the one-minute probes in which students read texts for 60 seconds offer wonderful ways for measuring fluency and decoding quickly and validly. But what about assessing comprehension? Is it possible to assess comprehension in a way that is quick and valid?

I think informal assessment is much more effective and comprehensive than standardized assessments that attempt to minimize the role of the teacher. I am a firm believer in the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). Yet I am finding that IRIs differ greatly in the scores that can be obtained. Not long ago I had graduate students administering two different IRIs to students. They found that the two different IRIs give radically different measures of students' overall reading proficiency. On one third grade passage, for example a third grader read with 99% accuracy and 100% comprehension. The third grade passage from another IRI administered to the very same student resulted in 88% accuracy and 40% comprehension. That same trend was found on other passages and with other students. When this happens, which IRI performance is the valid one? How can assessment ever be made valid when the reliability and consistency of the scores we obtain have such great variance?

What Kind of Professional Development?

The National Reading Panel has told us that teacher professional development in literacy is a critical factor to reading success. But again, while the big idea is certainly evident, what does this mean for schools? Is there a place for one-shot professional development? Most people would say no, but we do it quite often, and I know of many teachers who decided to get more involved in their own professional development after attending a single inservice session.

If long term professional development is the goal, what should effective professional development look like? This is an issue that absolutely needs to be addressed. Do we have good models of successful professional development approaches?

I think the model offered by the Benchmark School in Media, Pennsylvania offers a good way to think about the professional development of teachers. Under the leadership of school principal Irene Gaskins, the faculty chooses a topic to explore, define, develop, and translate into curriculum and instruction each year. It is the faculty itself that is empowered by choosing its own problems and investigating them on their own, calling in consultants when needed.

So how do we go about developing and testing models of instruction that are based on the more general research and theories of literacy? I believe that members of the College Reading Association are in a unique position to make this happen. We may not be the basic researchers who do the more general research and form the fundamental theories of our profession. We are not the teachers who work with children on a daily basis. We are the "tweeners," those who are the bridges between the big picture, big research, big theories from the National Reading Panel and other such organizations and actual classroom practice.

We understand those big ideas and theories and we can put them into meaningful models of practice and evaluate them. One of the great needs in our field are more literacy scholars, like those in CRA, who feel at home both in the world of research and theory and in the world of classroom and clinical practice–a group of educators who can take the more general findings of the National Reading Panel and develop ways for implementing those findings in real classroom settings. It is in the gulf between the theory and the practice that the members of the College Reading Association can make, and have made significant contributions to the field of literacy education. Interestingly, even the title of our own publication, *Reading Research and Instruction* is suggestive of the model of connecting theory and practice, researchers and practitioners. Our newest journal, *Literacy Cases Online,* provides us with another powerful tool for adding flesh and bones and life to the more broad theories of effective literacy instruction that currently guide literacy education policy in the United States.

We know a lot about what works in reading education. That is, we have a good general picture of effective literacy education. For that general picture to come to life in our country's classrooms, we need scholars who are willing and able to develop specific models of instruction that apply those general theories and broad understandings into actual classrooms and with real teachers. This is a critical need. Members of the College Reading Association, I believe, are some of the best-suited scholars to make that happen.

References

Cunningham, P. M., & Cunningham, J. W. (1992). Making Words: Enhancing the invented spelling-decoding connection. *The Reading Teacher, 46*, 106-115.

Cunningham, P. M., Hall, D. P., & Defee, M. (1998). Nonability-grouped, multilevel instruction: Eight years later. *The Reading Teacher, 51*, 652-664.

Donahue, P. L., Voelkl, K. E., Campbell, J. R., & Mazzeo, J. (1999). *NAEP 1998: reading report card for the nation and the states.* Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

National Reading Panel. (2000). Teaching *children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Opitz, M. F., & Ford, M. P. (2001). *Reaching readers: Flexible and innovative strategies for guided reading.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Oswald, R. A., & Rasinski, T. (2001). Making and Writing Words in a second grade classroom. In W. Linek, E. Sturtevant, J. Dugan, & P. Linder (Eds.), *Celebrating the voices of literacy: The 23rd yearbook of the College Reading Association* (pp. 108-116). Readyville, TN: The College Reading Association.

Postlethwaite, T. N., & Ross, K. N. (1992). *Effective schools in reading.* Hague: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Stevenson, B. (2001). *Efficacy of the Fast Start parent tutoring program in the development of reading skills by first grade students.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

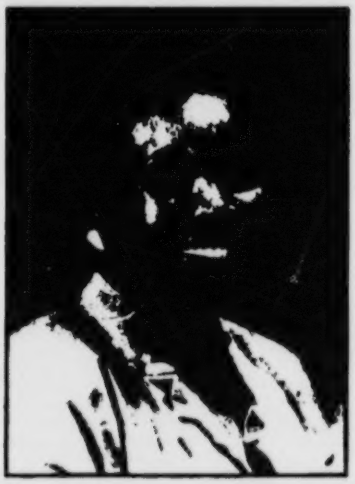
Zimmerman, B., Foreman, T., & Rasinski, T. (1996). Reading Workshop: An early intervention approach for at-risk students. In E. Sturtevant & W. Linek (Eds.), *Growing literacy: Yearbook of the College Reading Association* (pp. 159-169). Harrisonburg, VA: College Reading Association.

STORIES THAT CAN CHANGE THE WAY WE EDUCATE

Keynote Address

Patricia A. Edwards

Michigan State University



Pat Edwards is a Professor of Language and Literacy and a Senior Researcher at the National Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement at Michigan State University. She is also the recipient of the prestigious Michigan State University 2001 Distinguished Faculty Award. She holds a Doctorate in Reading Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is the author of two nationally acclaimed family literacy programs: "Parents as Partners in Reading: A Family Literacy Training Program" and "Talking Your Way to Literacy: A Program to Help Nonreading Parents Prepare Their Children for Reading." She was a member of the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association from May 1998 to May 2001. Also, she participated in the UNESCO World Symposium on Family Literacy as one of 50 researchers contributing to the development of world policy on family literacy. Dr. Edwards has served as an advisor to the First National Goal "Readiness for School," and the Michigan State University Institute for Families, Youth, and Children. Numerous foundations and organizations have recognized her research. Dr. Edwards is on assignment with Heinemann Speakers Bureau and she has held workshops, inservice training sessions with school districts nationwide and abroad.

Dr. Edwards has taught in public schools and universities for twenty-five years has published books and articles focused on family/multigenerational literacy and emergent literacy. Her research has been published in such journals as: Yearbook of the National Reading Conference, Theory into Practice, Teaching Education, Educational Policy *and many others. She is the author* *of A* Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to Parents *(Heinmann, 1999). She is also the author of two forthcoming books:* Examining Dialogues Used in Parent-Teacher Conferences *(Heinemann) and* Children's Literacy Development: Making it Happen Through School, Family and Community Involvement *(Allyn & Bacon).*

When Dr. Jane Mantanzo invited me to speak at CRA in March 2001; I wondered how I would address the four divisions of CRA: Teacher Education (the largest), Clinical, College Reading, and Adult Literacy. As I struggled with my talk for this occasion, it led me to reflect on my career that I found touched these four divisions in one way or another. As a graduate student at Duke University, I worked in the reading clinic and at Louisiana Tech University, I coordinated the Reading and Study Skills program. While I witnessed much success working in the Duke University reading clinic and in coordinating the reading and study skills program at Louisiana Tech University, my stories as a teacher educator and my work in adult literacy are stories that I feel have changed the way we educate children in this country. Therefore, I have decided to share these stories with you.

Beginning the Story

When I entered college I knew automatically that I was destined to become a teacher, simply, because I had been told all of my life that teaching was a good career for women, especially African American women. I attended a small African American teachers' college in the South (Albany State College, now Albany State University located in Albany, Georgia) and was constantly reminded of how important my role would be as an African American educator in the lives of boys and girls of color. My undergraduate professors often informed me that African American students needed to see positive role models in the classroom. Specifically, they needed teachers who understood something about their cultural heritage as well as their learning styles in order to assimilate education with the family and community life.

My teaching career would begin within a new integrated system of education and this caused concern for my undergraduate professors about the problems I might encounter as an African American teacher in a school with a majority White population. These professors agonized with me over the challenges for me as a minority teacher given the fact that I might end up in contexts where I could be the only minority teacher in the school setting. The existence of this possibility prompted them to suggest I attempt to play an informal role in helping my White colleagues understand the African

American culture, while utilizing my White colleagues to assist me in understanding theirs. Despite this, however, my professors' attention to the need for creating relationships that promoted understanding between the home and school cultures were nonexistent. In fact, they provided no training or guidance as to how I could best interact with the families of the students in an integrated school setting. Further, I had no formal guidance in understanding and appreciating the home literacy environments of my newly diverse population of students or knowledge of whether their culture did or did not resemble my own, and if this would make a difference in my ability to work with the families of my students. My professors apparently were unaware that my lack of knowledge about home literacy environments could cause me to unknowingly alienate my students and their families, thus negatively affecting their quality of education.

Perhaps my undergraduate professors assumed that I would discover how to work with families based on "gut reaction" or "instinct" or that what I needed to know I would be able to infer easily from general descriptions of family life for a particular cultural group. However, these assumptions have serious limitations and in fact offer further problems for helping teachers to understand the families of their students.

As a masters student at North Carolina A&T University, I was involved in an innovative program designed to increase the number of minorities in higher education. Consequently, I began my joint college and classroom-teaching career at North Carolina Central University that was a rare and wonderful experience. I coordinated the Pre-Student Teaching Program and taught in the public schools in Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill. Because of my unusual experience of serving both as a college and classroom teacher simultaneously, I can comfortably say that I began my academic career by trying to understand how to teach myself as well as helping preservice teachers learn to teach in a variety of teaching situations, i.e., team teaching, self-contained, non-graded, open classroom, multi-aged grouping, etc. I explored, along with my students, the knowledge and skills necessary to teach in these situations. I also began to examine the impact of these new organizational patterns on parents and children.

During this same period of time, I was enrolled in an educational specialist program at Duke University. At Duke, I spent a lot of time working as a reading clinician. I then decided to go the University of Wisconsin-Madison to work on my doctorate in reading education.

After completing my doctorate, I accepted a position at Grambling State University, a small, southern black university located in a rural, northern Louisiana community (Grambling, LA). This experience allowed me to share some of the frustrations black teacher educators at primarily black colleges/universities are facing, i.e., declining enrollments in teacher preparation programs, large numbers of students failing teacher competency tests, and weaker students choosing to become teachers. I addressed in my seminar class the issue of families and children because my students expressed to me that their parents had struggled with the "system" to get them through it, and after getting through it, they still felt that they had been "dealt a bad deal," so to speak. For example, one student named Cassandra told a chilling story of how her parents had to fight with the principal, teacher, and supervisor when she was in fourth grade to prevent them from putting her in a special education class. Angela, another student in the seminar class, commented that she and her parents experienced teachers quickly giving up on her and wanting to track her into lower sections or special education classes. Several other students agreed with Cassandra's and Angela's past encounters and indicated that their parents had fought similar battles. Intrigued by these relevations, I began to explore with my students the possibilities of what it would mean to improve the "system" that they said had not served them and their families adequately.

While teaching at Louisiana Tech University, a predominately White southern university located in a rural, northern Louisiana community (Ruston, LA), I was faced with another challenging situation. My White students often complained that "our teacher training program has not done a very good job in showing us how to work with families, especially families different from us, and we desperately need to know how to do this."

As a teacher trainer and reading educator, I have always been interested in the family's ability to support its children's development as readers and writers. In 1983 I got an opportunity to develop this interest that later evolved into the *Parents as Partners in Reading* program. In the spring of 1983, I received a W. K. Kellogg National Fellowship. As part of the Fellowship, I decided to focus on family involvement through employing multiple lenses, which draw from an educational, psychological, sociological, cross-cultural, and policy perspectives. Over the three-year fellowship period, I visited over fifty agencies, organizations, and institutions of higher education throughout the United States and abroad. This opportunity gave me the distinct opportunity to communicate with many noted experts who addressed family issues from multiple perspectives. Some of these experts included: Joyce L. Epstein, Oliver Moles, Dorothy Rich, Shirley Brice Heath, Valora Washington, Dorothy S. Strickland, David L. Williams, Jr., Barbara Rogoff, Eugene Garcia, Vincent Greaney, and Moncrieff Cochran.

After studying work on family involvement from various perspectives, I began thinking about how I could utilize the information I had gathered to both help my own community of Ruston, Louisiana, where I was living and working at the time, as well as fulfill the goals of the fellowship. It was at this point that I decided to volunteer to be a parent consultant at the local Head

Start Center in this small rural northern Louisiana community. My goal was twofold: (1) to increase the families' awareness of the importance of supporting their children's educational development; and (2) to assess how low SES parents interpreted the request from teachers to read to their children (Edwards, 1989). What I found was that the ways parents interpreted the teacher request to "read to their child" was often quite divergent to the goals and practices intended by the teachers. Also, I discovered that while teachers thought that their requests for parent involvement was quite clear and specific, parents in fact where often confused or uncertain about what "read to your child" entailed. Additionally, I found that there was little evidence that the teachers' requests acknowledged the enormous challenges faced by parents on a daily basis. Requests to "read to your child" or "come to school" did not account for the high illiteracy rate of parents or the difficulty poor parents' face in arranging time away from a low paying job or in finding child care for younger siblings.

After a successful year at the Head Start Center, I moved to Louisiana State University where I continued my research on parent-child book reading. I organized the *Parents as Partners in Reading Program* at Donaldsonville Elementary School located in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, a small, rural southern community. The Learning Together Company in 2003 will publish an updated and revised version of the Parents as Partners in Reading Program. My goal was to train parents to participate in effective book-reading interactions with their children. It involved defining for parents the participatory skills and behaviors found in effective parent-child reading interactions. The most effective reading interaction techniques were also modeled for the parents.

Over ten years ago, I met with a group of low-income mothers with marginal reading skills in the school's library at Donaldsonville Elementary School for two hours once a week for twenty-three weeks. In these sessions, the mothers learned how to share books with their children. The book-reading intervention (*Parents as Partners in Reading,* see Edwards, 1993) fell into three phases: coaching, peer modeling, and parent-child Interaction. Each phase was approximately the same length (6 or 7 weeks). The first phase, coaching, consisted of me modeling book-reading behaviors (i.e., previewing books, asking questions, varying voice, pointing to pictures/words, permitting the child to explore book, linking text-to-life, and life-to-text connections, etc.).

The second phase of instruction, peer modeling, focused on promoting parents' control of the book-reading sessions and strategies. In this phase, parents began to direct the book-reading strategies sessions themselves, focusing on modeling particular book-reading strategies for the group and practicing the targeted strategies with one another. More specifically, one or two parents each week would model how they would read a book to their child for the entire group, and the other parents would provide feedback and coach one another in the use of the strategies. My role in the phase was supportive and served to: (a) guide parents' participation in book-reading interaction with each other, (b) find connections between what the parents already knew and what they needed to know, (c)model effective book-reading behaviors for the parents when such assistance was needed, and (d) provide praise and support for their attempts.

During the final phase, parent-child interaction, I ceded total control to the parents and functioned primarily as a supportive and sympathetic audience: offering suggestions to the mothers as to what books to use in reading interactions with their children; evaluating the parent-child book-reading interactions; and providing feedback or modeling. In this final phase, parents actually brought their own children to the sessions and used the strategies directly with them.

In addition to learning how to share books with their children, parents were acquainted throughout the year with the various types of literature (e.g., Mother Goose, poetry books, board books, pop-up books, flap books, cloth books, plastic books, alphabet books, wordless picture books, predictable books, easy to read books, picture storybooks, and folk and fairy tales). They were also acquainted with the types of skills stressed in the various children's books. For example, parents were informed that cloth, toy, and vinyl books help children identify colors, sounds, and familiar objects in the environment. Board books will build their children vocabularies, and increase their awareness of numbers, colors, shapes, and seasons. Alphabet and counting books focus on development specific skills, such as learning to count sequentially from one through ten and learning to identify the letters of the alphabet. Concepts books will help their children understand easy concepts as well as abstract ones. Easy concepts included colors, such as red or blue, and shapes such as circle or square. The more difficult books may introduce opposite concepts such as fast or slow.

I spent a great deal of time with the parents focusing on words found in basic concept books (see Jett-Simpson, 1984). The concepts addressed included: position concepts, time concepts, size and weight concepts, distance and height concepts, speed concepts, number/amount concepts, color concepts, and shape concepts.

The parents were also shown what to look for in books for children. For example, they were encouraged to ask themselves the following types of questions:

1. Are the illustrations colorful and appealing?
2. Is the size of the book comfortable for your child to hold?
3. Can the print be easily read?

4. Is the language natural and appealing?
5. Is the story or information worth reading?
6. Is this a book both my child and I will enjoy?

Lastly, the parents were encouraged to tap other sources for guidance in book selection. I suggested that they tap one or all of the following sources for guidance in book selection:

1. Ask other parents what books they are reading to their children.
2. Ask librarians to suggest the more popular books.
3. Ask bookstore sales people what books are best sellers.
4. Ask your child to name a book he or she likes, then try to find a similar one or one written by the same author.

Recruiting Parents

Some of the critics of programs designed for low-income families have said that parents will not attend because they are simply not interested in helping their children. This is not true. Laurea (1986) and Obgu (1974) found that non-mainstream parents who lack knowledge do not necessarily lack interest in their children's schools or in learning how to help their children. In order to dispel this belief when implementing my program, I asked for community support in recruiting parents for the book-reading program. I contacted an unlikely group of community leaders who knew the parents in other contexts outside of school—a bar owner, bus driver, grandmother, the ministerial alliance, and people sitting on street corners.

The ministers agreed to preach from their pulpits about the importance of parents helping their children learn to read and especially the importance of parents attending the weekly book-reading sessions. After my first meeting with the ministers, a priest of a predominately African-American Catholic Church urged parents to participate in the book-reading program, noting in a sermon that literacy was an important tool of faith and that children needed to be able to read the confirmation requirements. Both Black and White ministers delivered similar messages urging parents to attend the program and to help their children in school weekly.

The owner of a local bar surfaced as a strong supporter of the program. He attended all of the book-reading sessions and told the mothers who patronized his establishment that they no longer would be welcome unless they put as much time into learning how to read to their children as they spent enjoying themselves at his bar. He transported mothers to and from the sessions, working with the social services department to secure babysitters for parents who otherwise would not have come.

The bus driver offered to drive parents to the program each week. The grandmother organized a telephone campaign that involved calling program participants each week. Lastly, the people sitting on the street corners began to talk about the program and encouraged all the parents they came in contact with to attend.

Reactions to and Support of the Book-Reading Program

For these parents, the school library became a place for gathering socially to talk about literacy and to exchange ideas—a kind of family gathering place. The library atmosphere helped the parents to relax and to enjoy learning how to help their children. The parents came to understand that abundant experiences with simple books, and repeated readings of familiar books and stories would benefit both them and their children. Parents who feared coming to school because of their own past experiences now enjoyed coming and could actually laugh about the experiences they were encountering. Several parents expressed that they were having the opportunity to relive in a positive way their school experiences through their children and they loved every moment.

Recognizing the need for helping marginally literate parents help their children, the school media specialist redefined the role of the school library by making it accessible to these new clients. For example, she taught the parents how to be library assistants. She showed them how to reshelf books in their proper place, how to use the card catalog, and how to be of assistance to other parents if she was not available. Further, the media specialist designed a computer program, which listed the names of each child whose parents were participating in the book-reading program. The parents were able to check books out under their child's name. She kept a computerized list of the types of books the parents were checking out. This information was shared with the child's teacher and me.

The school media specialist assisted me each week in selecting the books correlated to the topics that were being addressed in the book reading sessions. She also assisted me in selecting books that the parents could understand. The school media specialist commented that the library had become one of the busiest and most productive places in the school. She expressed amazement that showing parents how they can help their children can change parents' views about the school as well.

Concluding Comments about the Donaldsonville Story

The Donaldsonville parent story greatly impacted me and it also greatly impacted our nation. A new field of study emerged from this research called "family literacy." Former First Lady Barbara Bush is a big supporter of this new field of study.

I strongly believe that parents want a better life for their children than for themselves. Education is part of that better life. Most of us would agree that when semiliterate, functionally illiterate parents are educated with their children, they are better able to work productively themselves, and they are better able to provide the atmosphere that will nurture the intellectual development of their children. And their children in turn are more likely to lead more productive lives.

Another Story to Tell

When I moved to Lansing, Michigan in 1989 to teach at Michigan State University, I continued my research on families and children. I always wondered if there were other stories that parents needed to "tell" and teachers needed to "hear." Therefore, in the fall of 1995, I met with a group of twelve first-grade teachers in Lansing, Michigan. The teachers in my research study group represented eight of thirty-three elementary schools in Lansing, and the schools in which they teach are located in very diverse communities culturally, economically, and ethnically. I asked the teachers to identify a pool of students who were having difficulty learning to read and write, and who were at-risk of failing first grade.

As a consequence, I interviewed the parents of the children that the teachers identified as being at-risk of failing first grade to learn about their stories of their children's early literacy beginnings. I called these stories, "parent stories" of early literacy. I define parent "stories" as the narratives gained from open-ended conversations and/or interviews. In these interviews, parents respond to questions designed to provide information about traditional and nontraditional early literacy activities and experiences that have happened in the home (see Edwards, et al., 1999). According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992) "every parent has his or her own story to tell" (p. 57). Coles (1989) contends, "one's responses to a story is just as revealing as the story itself" (p. 18). Victoria Purcell-Gates (1995) states, "When we seek to understand learners, we must seek to understand the cultural context within which they have developed, learned to interpret who they are in relation to others, and learned how to process, interpret, or decode, their world" (p. 5). Courtney Cazden (1988) supports Purcell-Gates contention by arguing that: "Teachers, like physicians and social workers, are in the business of helping others. But as a prerequisite to giving help, we have to take in and understand" (p.

26). I, too support the notion of taking in and understanding the world of others. This is certainly practiced in other professions. For example, when a parent takes their child to the doctor, the doctor is very dependent on the parent's history of their child's illness. Unfortunately, very few first grade teachers have a history of a child's literacy development from the parent's point of view.

I firmly believe that teachers are professionals who can master the challenge of working with and relating to families, not just children. Unfortunately, there are few guidelines or standards for teachers as they attempt to involve the whole family in a child's education. This contrasts with other professionals in the United States, starting with medicine, and continuing through law, architecture, engineering, and nursing that are characterized by a specialized knowledge base, a commitment to client welfare, and the definition and transmission of professional standards (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996).

I suggest that parent stories could serve as one common mechanism for teachers to draw on when they seek to involve parents in their child's education. It is common practice for professionals like doctors, lawyers, and architects to collect information, which gives them particular insights about their patients/clients. Teachers are often criticized for not living in the neighborhoods in which they teach, but rarely do doctors; lawyers or architects live in the neighborhoods in which they practice their professional craft. Instead these professionals rely on collecting information as a way of developing a professional interaction with their patients/clients. I approach parent involvement in the same way.

Concluding Comments about Parent Stories

Parent stories offer a route out of the blame cycle and the justification teachers sometimes give for not successfully teaching children labeled at-risk. Parent stories allow teachers to identify what it means, specifically, when we use the words "home literacy environment" to talk about students' success or lack of success in school. By using parent stories in this way, teachers are able to look at specific issues, problems and strengths of homes, which influence the literacy development of students. This is the first step towards making connections between parent stories and how they can be used to better educate every child.

Also, parent stories have the potential to alter teacher's own dispositions and practice. The concept of parent stories is supported by work of Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988). Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines stated:

> If we are to teach, we must first examine our own assumptions about families and children and we must be alert to the negative images in

> the literature . . . Instead of responding to 'pathologies,' we must recognize that what we see may actually be healthy adaptations to an uncertain and stressful world. As teachers, [administrators] researchers, and policymakers, we need to think about the children themselves and try to imagine the contextual worlds of their day-to-day lives. (p. 203)

In my opinion, parent stories should prompt the investigation and redirection of current "parent-involvement," "parent-teacher communication," and "creation of home-school connections" initiatives. It is also my opinion that parent stories underscore the importance that society must begin to really listen to all parent voices and value their information about their children without prejudice, judgment, or apathy. If we can do this, we will embrace the multiplicity of experiences that parents have and can bring to the educational adventures of their children.

References

Cazden, C. B. (1988). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Cobb, V. L. (1996). The changing context of teacher education. In F. B. Murray (Ed.), *The teacher educator's handbook: Building a knowledge base for the preparation of teachers* (pp. 14-62). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Edwards, P. A. (1989). Supporting lowere SES mothers' attempts to provide scaffolding for book reading. In J. Allen & J. M. Mason (Eds.) *Risk makers, risk takers, risk breakers: Reducing the risks for young literacy learners.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Edwards, P. A. (1993). *Parents as partners in reading: A family literacy training program.* Second Edition. Chicago: Children's Press.

Edwards, P. A., Pleasants, H. M., & Franklin, S. H. (1999). *A path to follow: Learning to listen to parents.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Jett-Simpson, M. (1984). *Parents and beginning reading.* Atlanta: Humanics Limited.

Laurea, A (1986). *Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital.* Unpublished manuscript, Department of Sociology, Stanford University.

Ogbu, J. (1974). *The next generation.* New York: Academic Press.

Purcell-Gates, V. (1995). *Others people's words: The cycle of low literacy.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families.* Portsmouth: NH: Heinemann.

Vandergrift, J. A., & Greene, A. L. (1992). Rethinking parent involvement. *Educational Leadership, 50*(1), 57-59.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

J. Estill Alexander Leader's Forum Address

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHAT RESEARCH REVEALS ABOUT LITERACY MOTIVATION

Linda B. Gambrell

Clemson University

Linda B. Gambrell is Professor and Director of the School of Education at Clemson University. Prior to coming to Clemson University, she was Associate Dean for Research at the University of Maryland where she taught graduate and undergraduate reading and language arts courses. She began her career as an elementary classroom teacher and reading specialist in Prince George's County, Maryland. She has written books on reading instruction and published articles in journals such as Reading Research Quarterly, The Reading Teacher, Educational Psychologist, *and* Journal of Educational Research.

From 1992-97, she was principal investigator at the National Reading Research Center where she directed the Literacy Motivation Project. She has served as an elected member of the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association, National Reading Conference, and College Reading Association. She served as President of the National Reading Conference and the College Reading Association. From 1993-96, She was co-editor of The Journal of Reading Behavior, *Publication of the National Reading Conference. She has received professional Awards including the 1998 International Reading Association Outstanding Teacher including the 1998 International Reading Association Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award, and the 2001 National Reading Conference Albert J. Kingston Award. Her current interests are in the areas of reading comprehension strategy instruction, literacy motivation, and the role of discussion in teaching and learning.*

This paper is based on an invited address at the first Estill Alexander Leaders in Literacy Forum at the 2001 College Reading Association annual conference in Orlando, Florida. It is an honor and privilege to be invited to deliver this address. Dr. Alexander had a very positive influence on my professional life as a colleague and a scholar. He was well known for his contributions to the field of reading motivation. His pioneering work in this area was influential in my own work, and it is fitting that at this first forum named in his honor that I address recent advances in the field of reading motivation. Dr. Alexander was indeed a scholar and a gentleman who embodied the best of what our field has to offer. He was committed to furthering the goal of literacy for all, was a dedicated member of CRA, and was a friend and mentor to many CRA members. I know that Dr. Alexander would be pleased to be remembered by his many CRA friends and colleagues every year at this forum in his honor.

My topic is motivation—specifically literacy motivation. Motivation has long been recognized in the educational literature as a powerful and useful construct. Researchers and teachers have become increasingly aware of the importance of literacy motivation in literacy development. Positive literacy motivation has been associated with a number of desirable outcomes including higher reading achievement, deeper cognitive processing, greater conceptual understanding, and willingness to persevere (Allington, 1986; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Hidi, 1990; Tobias, 1994).

In this paper I will explore what research reveals about effective literacy motivation, as well as what we need to know more about in order to create classroom contexts that foster motivation to read. We know that some students expend great time and effort on academic tasks such as reading, while other students do not. One of the lingering questions is *why* different students expend different amounts of time and effort on such tasks. Such differences are often explained as motivational in nature. Some students are more highly motivated to read than others. During the past decade there has been increasing interest in motivational factors that are specifically associated with reading motivation. Because of the powerful relationship between motivation and achievement, it is important that we come to a fuller understanding of the role of motivation in literacy learning.

Simple Definitions for a Complex Construct

My view of literacy motivation has been strongly influenced by the research of motivational theorists such as Ford (1992) and Winne (1985). Their work is grounded in the expectancy-value theory which emphasizes the roles of self-concept and value as critical constructs of motivation. The self-concept component is supported by a number of research studies that suggest students who believe they are capable and competent are more likely to outperform those who do not hold such beliefs (Paris & Oka, 1986; Schunk, 1985). There is also evidence to suggest that students who perceive reading as valuable and important, and who have personally relevant reasons for reading, will engage in reading in a more planful and effortful manner (Paris & Oka, 1986).

The motivational systems theory developed by Ford (1992) maintains that people are motivated to attain goals they value and perceive as achievable. Similarly, Winne (1985) views the "idealized reader" as one who feels competent and perceives reading as being of personal value and practical importance. The work of Wittrock (1986) has also been particularly influential in my own thinking about what constitutes motivation. According to Wittrock, motivation is the process of initiating, sustaining, and directing activity. In the research to date on literacy motivation far more attention has been devoted to what initiates engagement, while very little of the research has explored the nature of sustained engagement in reading. Maehr's (1976) research, for example, defines motivation as the tendency to return to and continue working on tasks. In my view, continuing and sustaining engagement in reading/literacy activities is clearly the heart of true motivation.

Some Things We Know and Some Things We Think We Know About Literacy Motivation

Research to date has revealed insights about the role of gender and grade level on literacy motivation. First, there is ample evidence that motivation to read decreases from grade 1 to grade 6 (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995), and that girls are more motivated to read than boys (Askov & Fischbach, 1973; McKenna, et al., 1995; Parker & Paradis, 1984). Recent research, however, suggests that perhaps we should not take these findings at face value. For example, while the research of McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) documents a decline in reading motivation as students go up the grade level, recent research suggests that there may be variations in the motivation of students, especially in the early grades as reading competence is being developed. A cross-cultural study conducted by Mazzoni, Gambrell, and Korkeamaki (2000) found that motivation to read increased during first grade on fall-to-spring measure and began to decline during second grade for both Finnish and U.S. students. Because American students begin first grade at age 6 and Finnish student begin first grade at age 7, this study documented a schooling rather than age effect on reading motivation. This finding suggests that first grade may be a very critical time in the development of motivation to read and that there are variations in motivation that have not been fully accounted for in the prior research that has suggested a linear decline in motivation from grades 1 through 6. Clearly, additional research is needed that will explore critical dimensions of motivation during the early developmental period of literacy acquisition.

Second, a number of studies have suggested that girls possess more positive attitudes about reading than boys (Askow & Fischbach, 1973; McKenna, et al., 1995; Parker & Paradis, 1983). This research is fairly consistent, except in the case of Finland, where 9 year old boys rated themselves as better readers than girls (Elley, 1994). However, in the cross cultural study by Mazzoni, Gambrell, and Korkeamaki (2000) with first grade students (US, age 6; Finland, age 7) and second grade students (US, age 7; Finland, age 8), US and Finnish girls reported more positive attitudes toward reading than boys at both grade levels. It should be noted that the finding reported by Elley (1994) was based on self-report on a single question that was used to infer children's self-perception of reading ability, while the results of the Mazzoni, Gambrell, and Korkeamaki (2000) study were based on a multiple-item motivational survey.

The general finding in the research literature that girls are more motivated to read than boys seems clear and straightforward. However, in reviewing the research on motivation and gender, several concerns arose. Most of the motivational research to date has focused on school or textbook reading and the reading of narrative. What has been neglected is information about the motivation of both boys and girls to read informational text. In a study by Gambrell, Codling, and Palmer (1996), third and fifth grade students were asked to tell about a story (narrative) they had recently read. For the third graders, 21 out of 24 students were able to tell about a story they had read recently, while all 24 fifth graders were able to do so. What was most telling in this study was the fact that when the third and fifth grade students were asked to tell about an informational text they had recently read, 5 out of 24 third graders could not remember reading any informational text, while 6 out of 24 fifth graders could not do so. There are obvious differences in the exposure and experiences students have in reading informational text that may be associated with literacy motivation. It may well be that these differences may also be related to gender. There are many questions that have not yet been fully explored with respect to findings about the role of gender in literacy motivation.

What Do We Know About Creating Motivating Contexts for Literacy Learning?

In Flippo's (2001) study of reading experts there was compelling agreement on the importance of literacy motivation. Many of the points of agreement among the literacy experts in Flippo's study were grounded in the belief that motivation is an important outcome of instruction. There appears to be congruence across theoretical perspectives, research findings, and literacy experts that the following classroom characteristics foster motivation to read: access to reading materials, opportunities for self-selection, and social interactions about books.

Access to reading materials

During the past decade, a number of studies documented that when students have classroom environments that are book rich, the motivation to read is high (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1993; Elley, 1992; Gambrell, 1995; Guthrie et al., 1996; Lundberg & Linnakyla, 1993; Morrow, 1992; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Purcell-Gates et al., 1995). Being surrounded by an abundance of high quality, high interest reading materials is critical to the development of reading motivation. Availability of books and other reading materials encourages students to engage in reading in a voluntary and sustained manner. However, one caveat is worth noting with regard to access to books. It is not just having books available that is important — rather it is how the books are made accessible to students and what teachers do to promote engagement with books and reading materials. We know, for example, that books that are displayed or featured in some way by the teacher are the books that students gravitate toward. It is also true, that students want to reread books that the teacher has read aloud. It seems that having books available and having a teacher who promotes reading in interesting and exciting ways creates a motivating context for literacy learning.

Opportunities for self-selection

Perhaps one of the most robust findings in the psychological literature is that choice is related to motivation. Consequently, it is no surprise that self-selection of reading material is strongly linked to motivation to read. The research supports the notion that the books and stories that students find most interesting are those they have selected for their own reasons and purposes (Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Palmer, Codling, & Gambrell, 1994). Schiefele's (1991) research revealed that students who were allowed and encouraged to choose their own reading material expended more effort in learning and understanding the material they read.

Research suggests that providing students with time to engage in self-selected reading promotes literacy motivation. Wiesendanger and Birlem (1984) analyzed eleven research studies on self-selected reading and reported that nine of these studies presented evidence that students were more motivated to read as a result of participating in self-selected reading. Increases in motivation to read have also been reported for a range of students who engaged in self-selected reading, including remedial readers (Mayes, 1982) and adolescent students with discipline problems (Coley, 1981). These studies also suggest that motivation to read is linked to spending more time reading, thereby helping students gain much needed practice and experience.

Social interactions about books

Theories of motivation and reading emphasize that learning is facilitated by social interactions with others. Several studies have documented that social interaction promotes achievement, higher-level cognition, and intrinsic desire to read (Almasi, 1995; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1995). A number of studies have also shown that a classroom environment that fosters social interaction is more likely to foster intrinsic motivation than more individualized, solitary learning environments (Ames, 1984; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1995). Guthrie et al. (1996) found that students who had opportunities to interact socially with peers during literacy activities were more intrinsically motivated to read, and they read more widely and more frequently than students who were less socially interactive. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), reporting on trends in academic progress, found that students who engaged in frequent discussions about reading with friends and family were more motivated to read, and had higher reading achievement scores, than student who did not have such interactions (Campbell et al., 2000).

Sharing ideas with others about books, stories, and information is an important factor in developing engaged and motivated readers. There is ample research evidence that social interactions about what one has read has a positive influence on reading motivation and achievement. In Flippo's (2001) study, there was agreement among literacy experts about the importance of the role of social interaction in reading. Specifically, there was expert agreement that children should be encouraged to talk about and share the different kinds of reading they do in a variety of ways with many others. Taken together, research studies and literacy experts place a high priority on social interactions associated with discussions about text, and that motivation is enhanced when students perceive the leaning context to be socially supportive.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: It's Not a Question of One or The Other

Perhaps the thing that all literacy researchers and teachers would agree upon is that we would like for all of our students to find reading personally rewarding. We want all of our students to be intrinsically motivated to read—we want them to read when no one is looking, when no one is offering candy or pizza. We want them to want to read because we know that literacy is one of, if not THE, cornerstone of academic success and good citizenship.

When students are intrinsically motivated, they engage in reading because they want to do it. On the other hand, if a student engages in reading only because they will receive a reward, we say that the student is extrinsically motivated. Extrinsic rewards can be either tangible (such as stars or candy) or can be intangible (praise from the teacher, feedback on performance). The question that has intrigued teachers and researchers for decades is "Should we use extrinsic rewards to encourage children to read?" While most of us would agree that teacher praise and teacher feedback are desirable, many would not agree that candy and stars are appropriate.

Fawson and Fawson (1994) explored the effects of tangible extrinsic reward for reading. They investigated a program that offered elementary children an incentive (a popular food) for reading a certain number of books. They compared the incentive group with the control group and found that intrinsic motivation to read did not increase as a result of the incentive program. Other researchers have reported results that suggest that if you reward a student who enjoys reading with an extrinsic reward, such as points, food, or money, the student may choose to read less frequently once the incentive is discontinued (Deci, Valerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). The concern then is that extrinsic rewards may have a detrimental effect on the intrinsic motivation to read.

Cameron and Pierce (1994) conducted a meta-analysis of the research on rewards. They concluded that extrinsic rewards do not necessarily have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation with respect to attitude, time on task, and performance. A number of studies have shown that, under certain conditions, rewards can enhance motivation. In these studies, students who were given an incentive (promised a reward for certain behavior) showed an increase in intrinsic motivation compared to students who were not offered an incentive (Brennan & Glover, 1980; Karnoil & Ross, 1977). On the other hand, other researchers have reported a negative effect on intrinsic motivation when incentives were promised for a specified level of performance (Deci, 1975; Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973).

As you can tell, the controversy around intrinsic and extrinsic motivation continues. Much of the research in the past has pitted intrinsic motivation against extrinsic motivation. During the past decade my views about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have changed dramatically. While I firmly believe that intrinsic literacy motivation is the ultimate goal of reading instruction, I now believe that there is a complex and not fully understood relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

For example, there is evidence that suggests that we are motivated by the reward itself (Deci, 1975). If we are paid to do a task such as reading, it may result in a decrease in our desire to read; however, being paid may be very effective in motivating us to make money. In other words, we tend to view the "reward" as desirable and valuable. Therefore, if we want to develop the intrinsic desire to read, books and extra time to read are probably the most effective rewards.

Research in the past has neglected to take a good look at the relationship between the extrinsic reward and the desired behavior. I have to admit that observations in the classroom of a truly outstanding teacher influenced my thinking about extrinsic and intrinsic motivation more than reading the existing research literature. In this classroom the teacher used primarily intangible extrinsic rewards, along with some tangible rewards to motivate students to engage in academic learning. For example, after a reading skill group where all children were able to demonstrate mastery, she rewarded the students with 10 extra minutes of free reading time. Following a math lesson, she rewarded the third grade students with the opportunity to take home a 4th grade math worksheet . . . if they wanted to. All students were eager to assume this challenge and every child in the class took that 4th grade math for homework. After another whole class lesson, the teacher rewarded the class by saying, "You all did such great work! I'm going to read 2 chapters to you during teacher read-aloud time today." Basically, what this teacher did was to demonstrate every day the value of literacy and other academic tasks. Her rewards were always linked to literacy and academic activities. In the literacy research, we have scant information about how reading related rewards influence intrinsic literacy motivation. Our observations of this outstanding teacher led us to develop what we call the "reward proximity hypothesis." This hypothesis posits that the closer the reward (books, reading time, etc.) to the desired behavior (engaging in independent reading) the greater the likelihood that intrinsic motivation will increase (Gambrell & Marinak, 1997).

Summary

I think we can all agree on the importance of literacy motivation. I believe that the central and most important goal of reading instruction is to foster the love of reading. Knowing **how** to read is not sufficient. Students must have both the skill and the will to read.

Students who are motivated to read will spend more time reading. There is clear evidence from reading research that the amount of time spent reading is the major contributor to reading proficiency (Allington, 1983; Stanovich, 1986). According to Cunningham and Stanovich (1998), reading has cognitive benefits beyond getting meaning from the page. Their research indicates that the very act of engaging in reading can help students compensate for modest levels of cognitive ability by increasing their vocabulary and general knowledge. Perhaps the most important finding from the research of

Cunningham and Stanovich (1986) is that ability is not the only variable that counts in the development of intelligence. Their research supports the notion that students who read a lot will enhance their verbal intelligence. They found that this was true for all students — those of all ability levels. Everyone benefited from time spent reading, but struggling readers benefited most. In other words, reading makes a person smarter. Students who are motivated to read will make time for reading, will read more, and as a result are likely to increase their intelligence. Current research supports the notion that motivation should be a central and significant consideration in the literacy curriculum. There are many issues related to reading motivation that will require our attention in the future in order to understand how children acquire motivation to read. We will need creative research designs and methodologies to explore the ever expanding questions about the role of motivation in literacy learning.

References

Allington, R. L. (1983). The reading instruction provided readers of differing reading ability. *Elementary School Journal, 83*, 549-559.

Allington, R. L. (1986). Policy constraints and effective compensatory reading instruction: A review. In J. V. Hoffman (Ed.), *Effective teaching of reading: Research and practice* (pp. 261-289). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. (1993, October 13). What are they to read? Not all children, Mr. Riley, have easy access to books. *Education Week*, 26.

Almasi, J. F. (1995). The nature of fourth graders' sociocognitive conflicts in peer-led and teacher-led discussions of literature. *Reading Research Quarterly, 30*, 314-351.

Ames, C. (1984). Achievement attributions and self-instructions under competitive and individualistic goal structures. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*, 478-487.

Anderson, R. C., Wilson, P. T., & Fielding, L. G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly, 23*, 285-303.

Askov, E. N., & Fischbach, T. J. (1973). An investigation of primary pupils' attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Experimental Education, 41*, 1-7.

Brennan , T. P., & Glover, J. A. (1980). An examination of the effect of extrinsic reinforcers on intrinsically motivated behavior: Experimental and theoretical. *Social Behavior and Personality, 8*, 27-32.

Cameron, J., & Pierce, W. D. (1994). Reinforcement, reward, and intrinsic motivation: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 64*, 363-423.

Campbell, J. R., Hombo, C. M., & Mazzeo, J. (2000). NAEP 1999 trends in academic progress: Three decades of student performance. *Education Statistics Quarterly, 21*, 31-36.

Coley, J. D. (1981). Non-stop reading for teenagers: What we have learned and where we go from here. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the College Reading

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Association, Louisville, KY. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 211951)

Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What reading does for the mind. *American Educator*, Spring/Summer, 8-15.

Deci, E. L. (1975). *Intrinsic motivation*. New York: Plenum Press.

Deci, E. L., Valerand, R. M., Pelletier, L., & Ryan, R. (1991). Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist, 26*, 325-347.

Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior.* NY: Plenum.

Elley, W. B. (1992). *How in the world do students read?* Hamburg, Germany: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Elley, W. B. (1994). *The IEA study of reading literacy: Achiegvement and instruction in thirty-two school systems.* Exter: BPCC Wheatons.

Fawson, P. C., & Fawson, C. (1994, May). Conditional philanthropy: A study of corporate sponsorship of reading incentive programs. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Reading Association, Toronto, Canada.

Flippo, R. F. (2001). *Reading researchers in search of common ground.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Ford, M. E. (1992). *Motivating humans.* New York: Sage

Gambrell, L. B. (1995). Motivation matters. In W. M. Linek & E. G. Sturtevant (Eds.), *Generations of literacy: Seventeenth yearbook of the College Reading Association* (pp. 2-24). Harrisonburg, VA: College Reading Association.

Gambrell, L. B., Codling, R. M., & Palmer, B. M. (Winter, 1996). Elementary students' motivation to read. (Reading Research Report No. 52). Athens, GA: University of Georgia-University of Maryland, National Reading Research Center.

Gambrell, L. B., & Marinak, B. A. (1997). Incentives and intrinsic motivation to read. In J. T. Guthrie & Al. Wigfield (Eds.), *Reading engagement: Motivating readers through integrated instruction* (pp. 205-217). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Gambrell, L. B., & Morrow, A. M.(1996). Creating motivating contexts for literacy learning. In L. Baker, P. Afflerbach, & D. Reinking (Eds.), *Developing engaged readers in school and home communities* (pp. 115-136). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Guthrie, J. T., Schafer, W., Wang, Y., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). Relationships of instruction to amount of reading: an exploration of a social, cognitive, and instructional connection. *Reading Research Quarterly, 30*, 8-25.

Guthrie, J. T., Van Meter, P., McCann, A. D., Wigfield, A., Bender, L., Poundstone, C. C., Rice, M. E., Faibisch, F. M., Junt, B., & Mitchell, A.M. (1996). Growth of literacy engagement: Changes in motivations and strategies during concept-oriented reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly, 31*, 306-325.

Hidi, S. (1990). Interest and its contribution as a mental resource for learning. *Review of Educational Research, 60* (4), 549-571.

Karnoil, R., & Ross, M. (1977). The effect of performance relevant and performance irrelevant rewards on children's intrinsic motivation. *Child Development, 48*, 482-487.

Lepper, M. R., Greene, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1973). Undermining children's intrinsic interest with extrinsic reward. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 28*, 124-137.

Lundberg, I., & Linnakyla, P. (1993). *Teaching reading around the world.* Hamburg, Germany: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Maehr, M. L. (1976). Continuing motivation: An analysis of a seldom considered educational outcome. *Review of Educational Research, 46*, 443-462.

Mayes, F. J. (1982). U.S.S.R. for poor readers. *Orbit, 13*, 3-4.

Mazzoni, S. A., Gambrell, L. B., & Korkeamaki, R. L. (2000). A cross-cultural perspective on early literacy motivation. *Reading Psychology, 20*, 237-253.

McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., & Ellsworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly, 30*, 934-956.

Morrow, L. M. (1992). The impact of a literature-based program on literacy achievement, use of literature, and attitudes of children from minority backgrounds. *Reading Research Quarterly, 27*, 250-275.

Neuman, S. B., & Roskos, K. A. (1993). Access to print for children of poverty: Differential effects of adult mediation and literacy-enriched play settings on environmental and functional print tasks. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*, 801-828.

Neuman, S. B., & Celano, D. (2001). Access to print in low-income and middle-income communities. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*, 8-26.

Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Gambrell, L. B. (1994). In their own words: What elementary children have to say about motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher, 48*, 176-179.

Paris, S. G., & Oka, E. R. (1986). Self-regulated learning among exceptional children. *Exceptional Children, 53*, 103-108.

Parker, A., & Paradis, E. (1984, October). *The second year of an examination of attitude development toward reading in grades one through six*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association, Wyoming.

Purcell-Gates, V., McIntyre, E., & Freppon, P.A. (1995). Learning written storybook language in school: A comparison of low-SES children in skills-based and whole language classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*, 659-685.

Schiefele, U. (1991). Interest, learning, and motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 26*, 299-323.

Schunk, E. (1985). Self-efficacy and school learning. *Psychology in the Schools, 22*, 208-223.

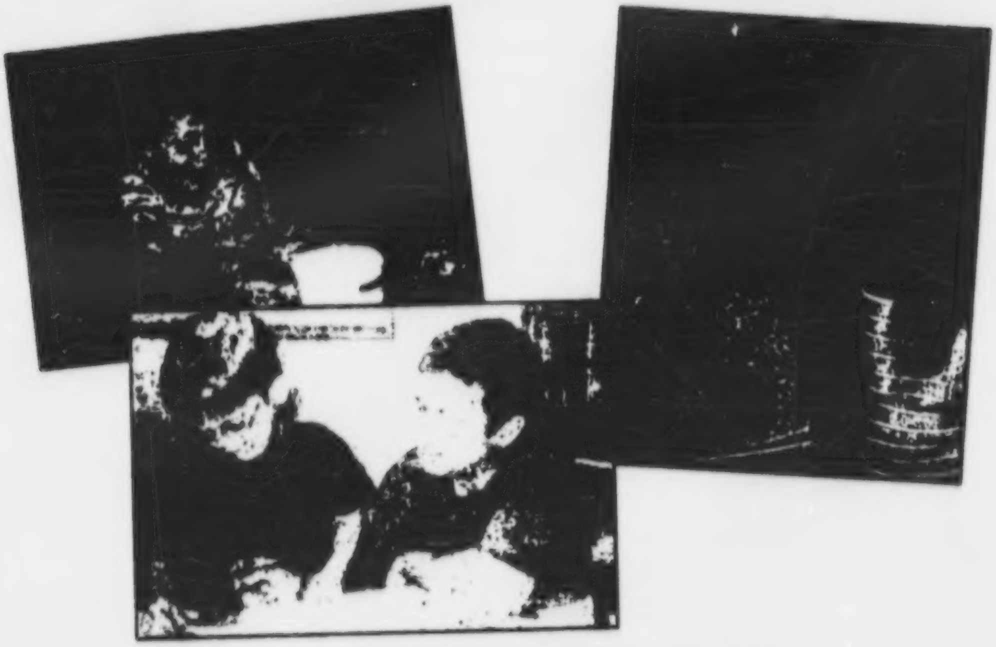
Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Resesarch Quaraterly, 21*, 360-401.

Tobias, S. (1994). Interest, prior knowledge, and learning. *Review of Educational Research, 64* (1), 37-54.

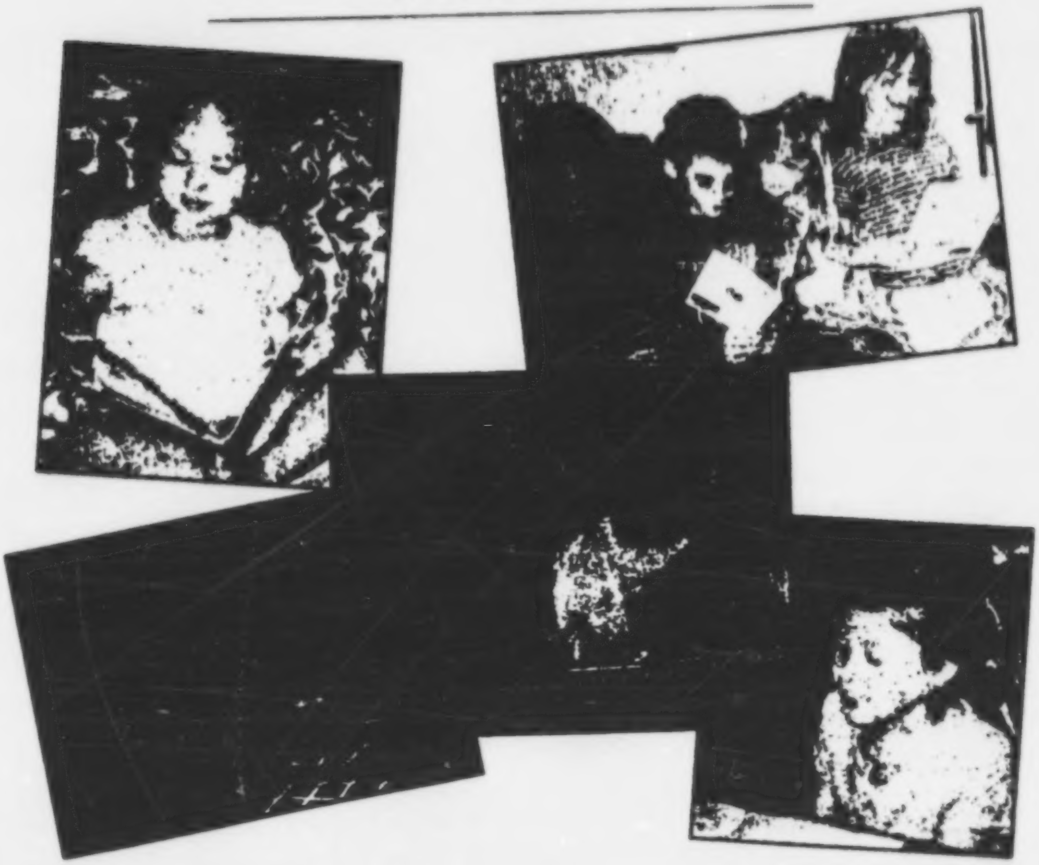
Wiesendanger , K. D., & Birlem, E. D. (1984). The effectiveness of SSR: An overview of the research. *Reading Horizons, 24*, 197-201.

Winne, P. (1985). Steps toward promoting cognitive achievements. *Elementary School Journal, 85*, 673-693.

Wittrock, M. C. (1986). Students' thought processes. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 297-314). New York: Macmillan.



RESEARCH AWARDS



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE EFFECTS OF THREE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES ON THE WRITING AND CRITICAL THINKING OF FIFTH GRADERS

Dissertation Award

Suzanne A. Viscovich
Floral Park, NY

Abstract

This research sought to determine the effects of three organizational structures on fifth-grade students' writing and critical thinking. Intact classes of 127 heterogeneously- grouped predominantly white fifth-grade students from an affluent suburb of New York were randomly assigned to one of three instructional conditions for writing a research report: outline, graphic organizer, or I-Chart.

Participants completed a pretest research report with no treatment and a posttest research report after one of the aforementioned treatments was administered. A rubric formulated by the New York State Education Department was used to assess the students' general writing abilities in both the pretest and posttest research reports. The students' critical thinking abilities in both pretest and posttest research reports were assessed using a modification of another rubric formulated by the State Education Department. A team of practitioners graded the research reports, and inter-rater reliability was assessed.

The findings showed that except for mechanics, the I-Chart was significantly more effective than both the outline and graphic organizer in all domains of general writing: meaning, development, organization, language use, and in all realms of critical thinking: understanding, analysis, and idea development. Findings in student questionnaires revealed that students in the I-Chart group rated the likelihood of using it again significantly lower than the outline group, yet they scored significantly higher than that group in virtually all domains of writing and thinking.

Educators are only too well aware of the profound need for our students to become critical thinkers and good writers, able to determine what information is needed and to understand how to assess it and utilize it. A concern at the national level regarding students' writing ability was that they were found to be deficient in higher-level thinking skills (Applebee, Langer, Jenkins, Mullis, & Foertsch, 1990), prompting educational researchers and theorists alike to be concerned about students' abilities to think critically about issues and topics of study (Hoffman, 1992).

Content and performance standards grew out of this national focus towards improving performance in the thinking and literacy achievement of our nation's students and the national cry to move out of mediocrity to excellence. During the 1990's, improving instruction in the nation's schools promoted by national professional organizations and the various state departments of education became known as standards. The International Reading Association teamed with the National Council of Teachers of English to produce 12 English Language Arts (ELA) Standards, at least five of which ask students to communicate effectively through writing; create, research, and discuss texts; and use a variety of sources to gather and share information (National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association, 1996).

The current New York State Learning Standards for the English Language Arts require that students construct a conceptual understanding of information. Standard One for the English Language Arts asks students to "collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information" (New York State Education Department, 1996, p. 1). Ultimately, to achieve this standard, students are responsible for transforming information from linear text into a cohesive, holistic, multi-relational piece of writing. This is a complex task with which students often require assistance (Laase, 1996), in that they may have to develop their ability to organize expository content on paper (Troyer, 1994). Furthermore, Standard Three for the English Language Arts (ELA) requires that students go on to "analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues" (New York State Education Department, 1996, p. 1). To achieve this standard, students must engage in a much higher level of thinking, one that involves critical analysis and evaluation. Scholars have emphasized the importance of developing students' abilities to direct their own recursive reading and writing activities, such as reading source material, writing notes, outlining, and writing and reading a draft, en route to thinking critically (Durst, 1989; Kennedy, 1985; McGinley, 1989; Nelson & Hayes, 1988) (as cited in Madigan & McGinley, 1990).

Related Research

Over the years, in efforts to produce more competent writers, researchers have introduced and supported various structures that purport to enhance writing skills for students. These have included linear- and nonlinear-organizational structures reflecting different content-specific patterns of knowledge and conceptual structures (Hyerle, 1996). Such structures have been known as outlines, graphic organizers, and inquiry charts.

The traditional outline was an initial structure used for organizing information. Coupled with three by five cards, the outline has been a most powerful way to harness immense amounts of information for research and writing (Hyerle, 1996). The effectiveness of outlines as organizational structures has been demonstrated by many researchers (e.g., Darch & Gersten, 1986; Glynn, Britton, & Muth, 1985) (as cited in Kiewra & Robinson, 1995). However, researchers also indicated that although outlines were a popular method of organizing expository information, there were potential problems with them (Waller & Whalley, 1987) (as cited in Kiewra & Robinson, 1995). Specifically, according to Kiewra & Robinson (1995), outlines, like text, had a linear format that discouraged learning relations among concepts and integrating information across topics.

The graphic organizer has been used as a nonlinear alternative to the traditional outline. Students have been encouraged to use graphic organizers to disembed information and relate it in a conceptual, organized pattern that represents a "whole" (Sinatra, 2000). In and of itself, the graphic organizer became not only an excellent organizational device for text which contained information about major topics, but also a visual tool which fostered students' higher-level thinking. Use of graphic organizers is one decision-making strategy for making thinking visible (Beyer, 1998), as well as a powerful tool for improving comprehension and summarization abilities of readers experiencing difficulty with text (Weisberg & Balajthy, 1987).

Experts have agreed that graphic organizers successfully served the dual purpose of fostering children's organizational skills and their critical thinking skills. At a basic level, research has evidenced that students using graphic organizers improved the organization and quality of their writing (Sinatra, Stahl-Gemake, & Morgan, 1986; Reynolds & Hart, 1990; Cronin, Sinatra, & Barkley, 1992; Troyer, 1994; Meyer, 1995; Hyerle, 1996). At a higher level, in addition to helping students choose and explore their topics, collect information, and organize material, graphic organizers helped students establish relationships between ideas (Washington, 1988; Sinatra & Pizzo, 1992; Harrington, Holik, & Hurt, 1998).

More recently, the inquiry chart or I-Chart has evolved through the work of classroom teachers (Hoffman, 1992). The I-Chart procedure also claims to serve the dual purpose of providing an organizational framework for the writing of research reports and of fostering critical thinking through literacy. The I-Chart, in its final form, is a conglomeration of the work of other scholars. Hoffman (1992) combined features of Ogle's (1986) K-W-L (what students Know, what they Want to know, and what they Learned) chart and McKenzie's (1979) data charts into the I-Chart. Ogle's chart enables students to record and examine the relationship between prior knowledge and newly acquired knowledge, whereas McKenzie's chart allows students to record and compare information among various resources. Hoffman (1992) contended that students could use the I-Chart framework to develop written reports, and that concepts such as organization and paragraph structure, so difficult for many students to grasp, are readily learned through support of the I-Chart.

Moreover, according to Hoffman (1992), the I-Chart nurtures critical thinking through literacy. A unique feature of the I-Chart is that it gives students the opportunity to compare answers from various sources (Watts, 1993) as well as to compare information with their prior knowledge. McKenzie (1979) described such a chart as one in which relevant information was organized into a form that is easy for students to compare across sources. The I-Chart procedure is organized around three phases: planning, interacting, and integrating and evaluating. The first phase involves note-taking, whereas the latter two require exploration of prior knowledge and beliefs and comparison and evaluation of information that might be conflicting (Hoffman, 1992). Herein may lie the critical thinking aspect of the I-Chart.

Rationale

A review of the research revealed no research studies that investigated the effects of I-Chart use with specific school populations. However, McKenzie (1979) reported that teachers and librarians have claimed that the quality of pupil reports is vastly improved when pupils use research charts as an intermediate step between the assignment and writing up the report. This claim has only been discussed in theory and not as empirical research to determine the effectiveness of I-Chart use as an organizer for research reports. Thus the purpose of this present investigation was to determine the effectiveness of these organizing tools; the traditional outline, the graphic organizer, and the inquiry chart (I-Chart), in helping fifth-grade students write a research report.

Method

Participants

The study was conducted with 127 predominantly white fifth-grade students in grades 2-5 in an elementary school located in an affluent suburb of Long Island, New York. The student body of this school was 98% white, .01% Hispanic, .01% Asian, and .004% African American. Of the 127 subjects, 97 were of average ability, that is, they were not identified as meeting criteria for gifted, remedial, or resource room services. Whereas 18 students were enrolled in the Remedial Reading Program, 6 participated in the District Program for the Gifted, and 6 others were identified as Resource Room students; that is, a multidisciplinary team classified them as being children in need of special education services.

Measures

The New York State *English Language Arts Assessment* (New York State Testing Program, 1999) was used to measure the major dependent variables in this study: overall writing and critical thinking. The instrument that was used to evaluate the students' overall writing ability in their research reports was a combined rubric drawn from the *New York State Testing Program English Language Arts Rubric for Reading/Writing* (2000) and the *New York State Testing Program Writing Mechanics Rubric* (2000). The writing mechanics section was added to four sections of the reading/writing rubric to make five components or qualities of writing evaluation: meaning, development, organization, language use, and mechanics. When each student's report was evaluated in this study, the raters circled the appropriate box for each quality, rated on a scale from one to four (see Appendix A).

To evaluate the students' critical thinking abilities, the researcher used a modification of the *Scoring Rubric for New York State Elementary English Language Arts Assessment* (1996). A jury of experts made up of literacy experts approved the modifications. This rubric was used to assess how well students read and wrote for information and understanding as well as for critical analysis and evaluation in an informational text. This rubric was used to evaluate students' thinking processes noted in such qualities of writing as understanding, analysis, and idea development. These qualities included the thinking skills of evaluating critical information, elaboration, interpretation, analyses, and drawing meaningful connections (see Appendix B).

Four major research questions were generated as follows with sub-questions for each:

1. Is there a difference in the *overall writing abilities* of fifth-grade students when they use one of three organizational structures?
   Based on the components of the New York State scoring rubric, the following sub-questions were generated: Is there a difference in the *meaning, development, organization, language use,* and *mechanics* of fifth-grade students' writing when they use one of three organizational structures?

2. Is there a difference in the *critical thinking abilities* of fifth-grade students when they use one of three organizational structures?
   Based on the components of the modified New York State scoring

rubric, the following sub-questions were generated: Is there a difference in the *understanding, analysis,* and *idea development* of fifth-grade students when they use one of three organizational structures?

3. Is there an *ability* by organizational structure interaction for *writing?* Sub-questions were generated for low-ability readers and high-ability readers as they interacted with overall writing abilities when using one of three organizational structures: Is there a difference in the *overall writing abilities* of fifth-grade *low-ability readers* or of *high-ability readers* when they use one of three organizational structures?
4. Is there an *ability* by organizational structure interaction for *critical thinking?*
   Sub-questions were generated for low-ability readers and high-ability, readers as they interacted with critical thinking abilities when using one of three organizational structures: Is there a difference in the *critical thinking abilities* of fifth-grade *low-ability readers* or *high-ability readers* when they use one of three organizational structures?

A questionnaire was administered to evaluate students' opinions of the use of organizational structures to benefit their writing and thinking while writing a research report.

Research Design

The design of this study was quasi-experimental, involving intact classes of heterogeneously grouped students. Six of the seven fifth-grade classes in the school participated in the study. To eliminate teacher bias, the seventh class, the researcher's own class, did not participate in the study. The six classes made up three groups of equally distributed students. They are equally distributed based on the previous year's teachers' rankings of the children's ability and performance. Each previous year teacher ranked her students into three categories by gender and functioning–high, medium, and low. The principal then separately compiled all of the teachers' high students, medium students, and low students and randomly distributed the children of various abilities to each of the seven classes to make the classes equally-distributed heterogeneous groupings. The six intact classes were randomly assigned to one of three instructional conditions, two classes to each condition, and received instruction in identical content over the duration of the study according to the instructional condition to which they were assigned. The researcher taught all three groups according to the appropriate instructional condition.

The dependent variables in this study were the scores on the general writing rubric: (a) meaning, (b) development, (c) organization, (d) language use, and (e) mechanics, and the scores on the critical thinking rubric: (a) understanding, (b) analysis, and (c) idea development. The major independent variable was instructional condition: (a) outline, (b) graphic organizer, and (c) I-Chart.

Data Collection

Study Procedures	*Instruments Used To Gather Data*
Write Lindbergh Research Report	NYS combined Writing Rubric NYS modified Critical Thinking Rubric
Instructional Procedures in one of three conditions	
Write research report on famous American	NYS combined Writing Rubric NYS modified Critical Thinking Rubric
Distribute Questionnaires	Questionnaires

Procedures

The New York State ELA was administered to all students involved in this study in January 1999 as part of the state and school assessment program, ensuring that students were familiar with the state assessment writing procedures. The six classes were randomly assigned to one of three treatments for the writing of their research report: (a) outline, (b) graphic organizer, or (c) I-Chart. The research theme for all three groups was famous Americans in history. The researcher worked with all six classes over a three-week period, initially modeling how to create and use the respective organizational structure en route to writing a research report, and eventually allowing students to create their own topics for their respective organizational structures and to utilize their own structures en route to writing the research report. Figure 1 delineates the daily steps taken by the researcher over the three-week period.

The completed Charles Lindbergh reports served as the pretest. After the reports were completed, the students received instruction in differing levels of questioning. Students were shown that a literal question dealt with information explicitly stated in text sources, whereas a higher-level thinking question required students to think critically about information stated and inferred in text sources. The completed famous American research reports served as the posttest.

The following three figures were the completed organizational structures created by the researcher with each respective group on Day 4 to model how to create topics or questions and how to utilize the structure en route to writing a research report.

Figure 1. Procedures for All Three Groups

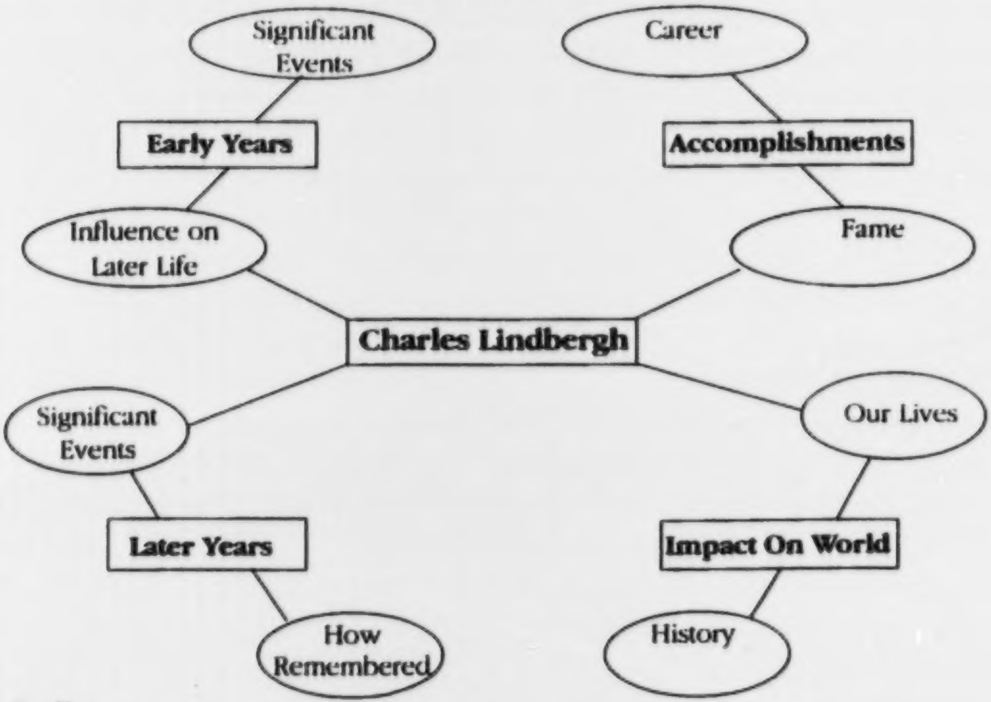
	Days 1, 2, 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Days 7, 8, 9, 10	Days 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Outline	Students given info on Lindbergh & instructed to write report without use of organizational structure.	Researcher modeled how to create topics or questions for structure & how to organize info on Lindbergh into outline & transform into research report. Inherent in modeling was instruction on factual & higher-level thinking questions.	Students selected famous American from list of 25. Researcher further instructed students on factual & higher-level thinking questions. Students produced own topics for outline.	Students received premade resource packets on chosen famous American. Researcher displayed sample outline again. Students made final additions or changes to individual structures.	Students took notes about chosen famous American on outline. Researcher present to answer questions & provide assistance.	Students continued taking notes & transformed notes into research report. Researcher was available in her classroom to answer questions & check work.
Graphic Organizer	Same	Same using graphic organizer	Same except produced topics for graphic organizer	Same except displayed & made additions or changes to graphic organizer	Same except took notes on graphic organizer	Same
I-Chart	Same	Same using I-Chart	Same except produced questions for I-Chart	Same except displayed and made additions or changes to I-Chart	Same except took notes on I-Chart	Same

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 2. Three Organizational Structures used for Report Writing and Critical Thinking

---

Graphic Organizer



Outline

Charles Lindbergh

I. Early Years
    A. Significant Events
    B. Influence On Later Life
II. Accomplishments
    A. Career
    B. Fame
III. Later Years
    A. Significant Events
    B. How Remembered
IV. Impact On The World
    A. History
    B. Our Lives

I-Chart

Charles Linderbergh	What were the significant events in his early years?	How did these early events influence his accomplishments?	What were his career and fame accomplishments?	What were the significant events in his later years?	How would history and our lives be different if he had not lived?
What I Know					
World Book					
Encarta					
Internet					
Audio-Visual					
Library Book					
Summary					

A few days after the intervention was completed, the students were given a questionnaire asking if and how their respective structure aided them in writing the report and in their thinking (see Appendix C). It included 4-point Likert-type responses as well as a short narrative. The practitioner was present while each class completed the questionnaire, reading and explaining each question and possible response to the class. The questionnaires were compared among the three groups.

Scoring Procedures

The students' pretest and posttest research reports were graded anonymously by a team of practitioners, comprised of the researcher, the reading specialist, and a fifth-grade teacher, according to the general writing rubric—*New York State Testing Program Grade 4 English Language Arts Rubric for Reading/Writing,* (2000) combined with the *New York State Testing Program Writing Mechanics Rubric,* (2000) (see Appendix A). The research reports were also graded by the same team of practitioners according to the critical thinking rubric—a modification of the *Scoring Rubric for New York State Elementary English Language Arts Assessment,* (1996) (see Appendix B). The researcher graded all 270 research reports, and the two other raters graded about 50-60 research reports each, half in collaboration with the researcher and half on their own. All three raters had been involved in the mandatory training and holistic scoring of the New York State ELA Assessment the previous year, but the voluntary nature of the scoring of all of this study's research reports demanded more time, which they could not fulfill. Inter-rater reliability was assessed with the Cronbach Alpha for general writing at .979 and the Cronbach Alpha for critical thinking at .923.

Results

Research Questions

To determine mean differences among the instructional condition and to assess condition by reading ability interactions, analyses of covariances were conducted. The initial writing pretests on Charles Lindbergh were used as the covariates in the ANCOVA's. Because the pretest by instructional method interaction was not significant in most cases and because the research questions were focused directly on growth between the pretest and posttest, a gain score analysis was used to analyze data (Schafer, 1992). Cohen's d, with a pooled standard deviation, was computed on the gain scores as a measure of effect size.

Findings for each of the four major research questions are as follows. Research Question 1: Is there a difference in the *overall writing abilities* of fifth-grade students when they use one of three organizational structures?

Table 1. Pretest, Posttest, and Gain Scores for General Writing Variable

Writing		Pre	Post	Gain
Outline	Mean			
(N=35)	Std. Dev.	2.11	2.15	0.04
		(0.35)	(0.55)	(0.43)
Graphic Organizer	Mean			
(N=43)	Std. Dev.	2.32	2.19	-0.13
		(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.43)
I-Chart	Mean			
(N=49)	Std. Dev.	2.30	2.57	0.27
		(0.39)	(0.50)	(0.40)

Table 1 shows that the students in the three instructional conditions scored similarly on the *general writing* pretest. On the general writing posttest, the I-Chart group scored higher (M=2.57, SD=0.50) than either the graphic organizer (M=2.19, SD=0.50) or the outline (M=2.15, SD=0.55) group.

An ANCOVA with the general writing pretest as the covariate showed a significant relationship between the pretest and posttest [F=67.67, p<.001]. However, neither the instructional condition [F<1] nor the condition by pretest interaction [F<1] was statistically significant.

A Gain Score Analysis was conducted to assess whether any significant differences in gain occurred between the instructional method conditions. The results showed a significant difference among the three conditions [F=10.47, p<.05]. Tukey's HSD test for pairwise differences showed that the I-Chart group [M=0.27, SD=0.40] gained significantly (p<.05) more in terms of general writing achievement than either the graphic organizer [M=-0.13, SD=0.43] or the outline [M=0.04, SD=0.43] group. For general writing, Cohen's d=.76, which is considered a large effect size (Cohen, 1992). This indicates that the I-Chart group gained approximately 3/4 of a standard deviation more than the other two groups combined.

Similar results were found for all of the sub-questions for Research Question 1 except for the last one. That is, although the students in all three groups scored similarly on the writing pretest in general writing and its categories, students using the I-Chart gained significantly more from pretest to posttest than students using outlines and graphic organizers in almost all realms of general writing: meaning; development; organization; and language use, with the exception of mechanics.

Research Question 2: Is there a difference in the *critical thinking abilities* of fifth-grade students when they use one of three organizational structures?

Table 2. Pretest, Posttest, and Gain Scores for Critical Thinking Variable

Critical Thinking		Pre	Post	Gain
Outline	Mean			
(N=35)	Std. Dev.	2.04	2.06	0.02
		(0.49)	(0.68)	(0.59)
Graphic Organizer	Mean			
(N=43)	Std. Dev.	2.15	2.05	-0.09
		(0.45)	(0.52)	(0.47)
I-Chart	Mean			
(N=49)	Std. Dev.	2.14	2.69	0.55
		(0.37)	(0.63)	(0.50)

Table 2 shows that the students in the three instructional conditions scored similarly on the *critical thinking* pretest. On the critical thinking posttest, the I-Chart group scored higher (M=2.69, SD=0.63) than either the graphic organizer (M=2.05, SD=0.52) or the outline (M=2.06, SD=0.68) group.

An ANCOVA with the critical thinking pretest as the covariate showed a significant relationship between the pretest and posttest [F=59.53, p<.001]. However, neither the instructional condition [F<1] nor the condition by pretest interaction [F=1.511] was statistically significant.

A Gain Score Analysis was conducted to assess whether any significant differences in gain occurred between the instructional method conditions. The results showed a significant difference among the three conditions [F=20.43, p<.05]. Tukey's HSD test for pair wise differences showed that the I-Chart group [M=0.55, SD=0.50] gained significantly more in critical thinking achievement than either the graphic organizer [M=-0.09, SD=0.47] or the outline [M=0.02, SD=0.59] group. For critical thinking, Cohen's d=1.14, which is considered a large effect size (Cohen, 1992). This effect size indicates that the I-Chart group gained more than 1 standard deviation more than the other two groups combined.

Similar results were found for all of the sub-questions for Research Question 2. That is, although the students in all three groups scored similarly on the writing pretest in critical thinking and its categories, students using the I-Chart gained significantly more from pretest to posttest than students using outlines and graphic organizers in all spheres of critical thinking: understanding; analysis; idea development.

Research Question 3: Is there an *ability* by organizational structure interaction for *writing?* Research Question 4: Is there an *ability* by organizational structure interaction for *critical thinking?*

Because there were only six Gifted children and they were not spread evenly throughout the three conditions, it was not possible to examine differences among groups in high-ability readers. Though differences in low-ability readers, resource room and remedial reading students, were examined and analyzed, only two of the potentially ten interactions were significant. In examining the means, it appeared that the students in the I-Chart condition gained, regardless of reading ability, whereas effects of other instructional conditions were dependent on ability level (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Estimated Marginal Gain Score Means General Writing

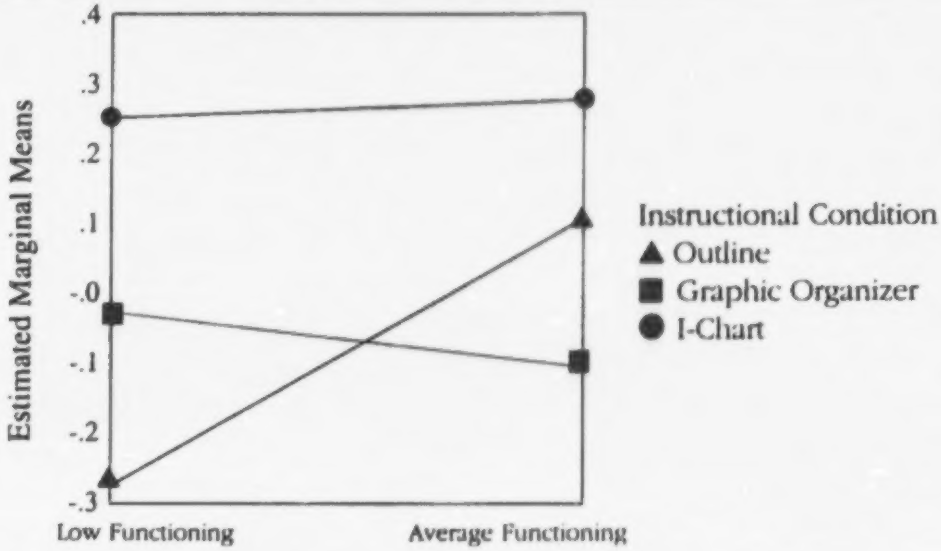
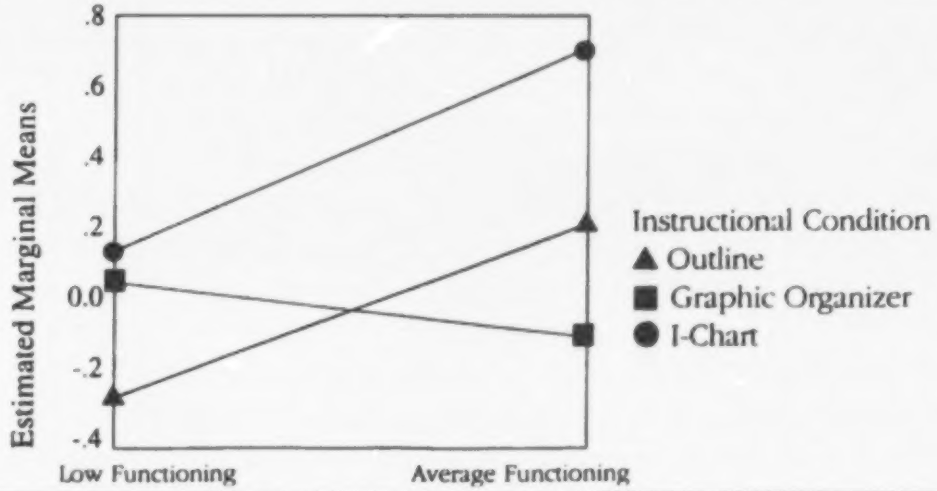


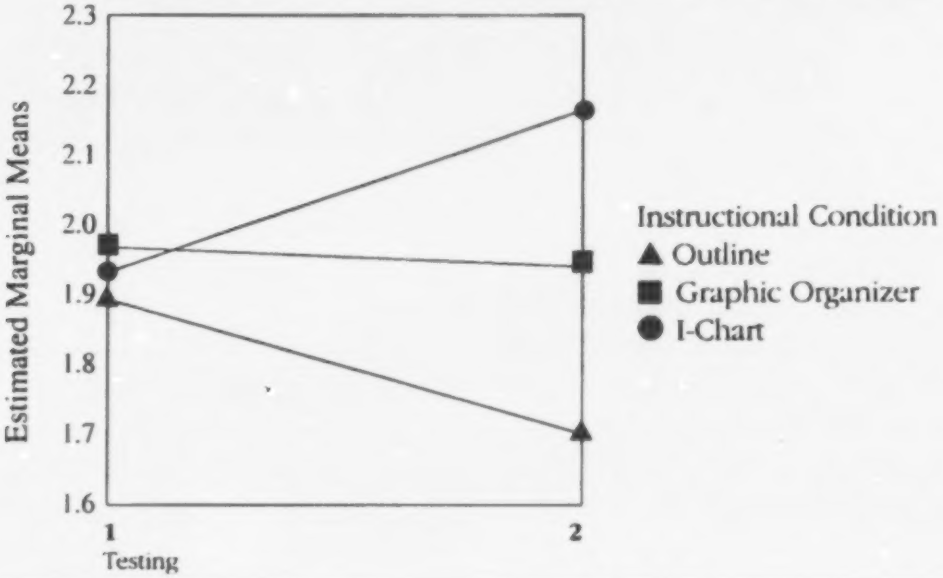
Figure 4. Estimated Marginal Gain Score Means Critical Thinking



In both writing and critical thinking, the low-functioning students performed better in graphic organizer than in outline, and the average students did better in outline than graphic organizer, as evidenced by their gain scores, whereas overall, both groups performed best in I-Chart. Therefore, from a practical standpoint, the I-Chart methodology would be recommended regardless of these interactions.

In examining the pre- and post-writing scores for low-functioning students, it can be seen in Figure 5 that they only made progress in the I-Chart instructional group. In both the outline and graphic organizer groups, there was a decline in from pretest to posttest.

Figure 5. Estimated Marginal Means of Pre/Posttest Writing Scores of Low Functioning Students



Questionnaires

For question 1: *How helpful was the organizational structure you used for your THINKING while researching and writing your report?*, the I-Chart group (M=3.22, SD=0.68) rated their organizational structure significantly higher [F=6.905, p<.001] than the graphic organizer (M=2.81, SD=0.66) and outline (M=2.74, SD=0.61) groups. For question 2: *How helpful was the organizational structure you used for actually WRITING your research report?*, the difference in ratings was not [F<1] statistically significant. For question 3: *How likely is it that you will use this organizational structure again to help you write a research report?*, there was a significant [F=4.311, p=.015] difference. Tukey's HSD showed that the outline group (M=2.83, SD=0.86) rated this likelihood significantly higher than the I-Chart group (M=2.32, SD=0.91), whereas the graphic organizer group (M=2.70, SD=0.74) was not statistically different from either.

In summary, the results revealed that although the students in all three groups scored similarly on the writing pretest in both general writing and critical thinking and their respective categories, the I-Chart group gained significantly more than both the outline and graphic organizer groups on the writing posttest in general writing as well as in critical thinking. In fact, the I-Chart group scored significantly higher than both the outline and graphic organizer groups in all categories of the general writing rubric except the category of mechanics and in all categories of the critical thinking rubric. That is, the I-Chart group scored significantly higher in meaning, development, organization, language use, understanding, analysis, and idea development on the posttest.

Discussion

Whereas previous researchers revealed that the graphic organizer has been an effective tool in improving student writing (Reynolds & Hart, 1990; Cronin, Barkley, & Sinatra, 1992; Meyer, 1995; Hyerle, 1996), this investigator did not find these benefits for this organizational structure. Rather, the I-Chart was identified as the most effective of the three tools in improving student writing. In this study, students were not given a previously constructed graphic organizer based on how the text was organized as in previous studies, but instead had to use the modeled structure of the graphic organizer (see Figure 1) to create topics for information about a famous American gathered from a variety of text sources. Furthermore, students were required to include information from several resources both in their graphic organizer and in their writing product, to compare and confirm information among resources, and to organize all of this information into a cohesive report about a famous American's life (see Appendix D).

In this study, the I-Chart group's gains from pretest to posttest in *general writing* and *critical thinking* and virtually all of their respective categories were significantly higher than the gains for the outline and graphic organizer groups. The significantly higher gains in all of these areas could be a result of the I-Chart's unique structure and characteristics. First, resources listed down the side with cells corresponding to each question filled in according to each resource could have led to improvement in the *meaning* and *development* realms of general writing and the *idea development* realm of critical thinking because in filling in the cells, students had to extract any and all information about every question from every single resource, thus providing them with more facts and details to be included in their reports. This premise is supported by the significant difference between the I-Chart group's and the outline group's responses to question three on their questionnaires and by the I-Chart group's narratives on their questionnaires. Question 3 asked how likely it would be that the students would use this organizational structure again to help them write a research report. The I-Chart group rated the likelihood of using their organizational structure again significantly lower than the outline group. Their reasoning was evident in the narratives where ten students of the fifty explained that it took too long to fill in the whole chart, and eight students complained about having to write the same information over "so many times." In fact, one student claimed that the I-Chart "gave me headaches" and another that repeating the information "was a waste of time." Still others exclaimed that they would not use it again unless they had a lot of time to complete it, "like a month!" One student went so far as to say that she would only use the I-Chart under one circumstance, "if it counts A LOT for my grade." Interestingly, the students who complained the most scored significantly higher on the research reports in almost all aspects of writing and in all aspects of critical thinking as measured in this study.

Secondly, the guiding questions listed across the top of the I-Chart might have caused higher gains in the *language use* category of general writing and in the *understanding* and *analysis* categories of critical thinking insofar as in addressing questions rather than topics, students might have delved deeper into the material, gaining understanding, making judgments, and giving opinions. One I-Chart student stated the following on his narrative in the questionnaire, "The I-Chart helped me to think while researching because when I read the resources, I had to think what was important, and when I put down all the information, it helped me verify facts." Another student asserted that if there were more than one answer, "I would have to think about which answer would go in the report." For the narrative in the questionnaire, children had to explain how the organizational structure helped students with the thinking and writing of their research reports. Thirteen students in the I-Chart group maintained that the I-Chart enabled them to write "a lot of different information," "a ton of data," "more than I thought I needed." One student admitted, "I couldn't have written as much without the I-Chart." The children's responses quoted above support the premise that the significant difference in gains between I-Chart and graphic organizer and outline groups could be due to the fact that the I-Chart students had no choice but to include a multitude of information from various resources whereas the others could have gotten away without doing so.

Furthermore, the fact that all information about each question is contained in one column of the I-Chart could have contributed to the higher gains in *organization* because in writing each section of the report, students simply had to glance down one column to find all pertinent information. In their narratives, 22 students in the I-Chart group credited the I-Chart' structure with helping them with the organization of their reports. "The writing part of the report was simple because all the information was in one column." "It was extremely easy after I decided where to make new paragraphs." "All I had to do was look down a certain column, and all the information would be there," "right in front of me," "so I could put it in sentence form in my head and then write it."

Finally, conflicting information between resources about a question in close proximity to each other on the I-Chart might have led to increases in the *analysis* sphere of critical thinking, making it easier for students to find conflicts between and make comparisons across resources because they were visually obvious by being listed in the same column. One student wrote this in his narrative. "All the information was in one column, making it easy to compare." Another added, "for example, if one book said the person was born in 1960 and another said 1920, I'd compare and see how many books said 1960 and how many said 1920."

Incidentally, the significantly higher gain from pretest to posttest of the I-Chart group was true for every area but one–*mechanics*. Actually, it makes sense that there would be no significant difference in mechanics among the three groups because an organizational structure should have little bearing on a student's application of the rules of grammar and spelling in his writing.

Limitations

The results of this study can only be generalized to the sample population, that is, primarily white fifth-grade students in an affluent elementary school on Long Island, New York.

Twenty-three students did not have ELA scores available for use as the covariate in the ANCOVA. Thus, the pretest research report was used as the covariate instead. Potentially, the ELA was a better measure of preexisting ability than the pretest.

Attrition was a threat to the internal validity of this study. Eight students, seven of whom were in the same class, were eliminated after the study began because they failed to complete either the pretest research report or the posttest research report. This attrition potentially affects the results. Due to the difference in sample size, the effects of the I-Chart are potentially overestimated.

Moreover, because the task in this study required researching skills such as note-taking and writing skills such as developing a topic and having voice, teacher differences are a possible threat.

The nature of this type of study, using rubrics and scoring scales, requires all raters to fulfill all pre- and post-rating obligations.

Implications

The I-Chart has proven to be an effective organizational structure for use with primarily white fifth-grade students in a high-achieving district. It appears that the nature of the I-Chart makes it a highly effective tool for improving the writing of these students' research reports, and especially for improving these students' critical thinking when researching and writing their reports. Its effectiveness needs to be investigated with various grade levels and with different populations of students, particularly low-achieving, special education, and students experiencing difficulty in achieving quality written products.

Furthermore, this study could be replicated with the addition of repeated trials through modeling and more practice. Perhaps getting better at and taking ownership of their structures would prompt the students to do more than just fill them with information and start thinking critically about the information in them.

Moreover, future researchers can focus on whole class or small group completion of the I-Chart. That is, an entire class or a small group of students can complete an inquiry chart together, and students can produce individual writings based on the completed charts.

This study has revealed that the I-Chart is an invaluable tool consistent with the requirements of the state standards in that it engenders both writing skills and critical thinking skills in children. However, the fifth graders who used the I-Chart asserted that they will not likely use it again in the future because it was tedious in that it required them to repeat the same information over and over so as to confirm or reject conflicting information and thus took an inordinate amount of time to complete. Because it has proven to be so invaluable to this study, it is pertinent that the I-Chart be modified so that students find it manageable and will voluntarily use it again. One suggestion might be that instead of rewriting repetitive information over and over, students could assign numbers or letters to facts from the initial resource, and when they find the same facts in another resource, they just write Fact 1 confirmed.

Significance of the Study

As previously noted, a national writing concern was that students were deficient in higher-level thinking skills, and educational researchers and theorists alike expressed concern about students' abilities to think critically about issues and topics of study. In the 21st century, inundated with new and higher learning standards for *all* students, the need for our students to become critical thinkers and good writers has become more profound than ever before. In order to achieve these standards, students must engage in a much higher level of thinking, one that involves critical analysis and evaluation.

This study has revealed that the I-Chart is an invaluable tool consistent with the requirements of the new state standards in that it engenders both writing skills and critical thinking skills in children, regardless of ability level. More importantly, the domain in which the I-Chart group students showed the most significant gains—large and extremely large—over the other two groups was *critical thinking*. This was evidenced in all of the subcategories of critical thinking: *understanding, analysis,* and *idea development*. It was also evidenced across *all* ability levels, indicating its effectiveness for *every* child. Ultimately then, won't the I-Chart help us meet our profound need?

References

Applebee, A., Langer, J., Jenkins, L., Mullis, I., & Foertsch, M. (1990). *Learning to write in our nation's schools.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Beyer, B. (1998). Improving student thinking. *The Clearinghouse, 71* (5), 262-267.

Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*, 155-159.

Cronin, H., Sinatra, R., Barkley, W. (1992). Combining writing with text organization in content instruction. NASSP Bulletin.

Harrington, M., Holik, M., & Hurt, P. (1998). Improving writing through the use of varied strategies. *Dissertation Abstracts International,* 040. (University Microfilms No. ED 420874)

Hoffman, J. V. (1992). Critical reading/thinking across the curriculum: Using I-charts to support learning. *Language Arts, 69*, 121-127.

Hyerle, D. (1996). Thinking maps: Seeing is understanding. *Educational Leadership, 53*, 85-89.

Hyerle D. (1996). *Visual tools for constructing knowledge.* Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kiewra, K. A., & Robinson, D. H. (1995). Visual argument: Graphic organizers are superior to outlines in improving learning from text. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 87*, 455-467.

Laase, L. (1996). Study skills. *Instructor, 106*, 118-119.

McGinley, W. & Madigan, D. (1990). The research "story": A forum for integrating reading, writing, and learning. *Language Arts, 67*, 474-483.

McKenzie, G. R. (1979). Data charts: A crutch for helping pupils organize reports. *Language Arts, 56*, 784-788.

Meyer, D. J. (1995). The effects of graphic organizers on the creative writing of third grade students. *Dissertation Abstracts International,* 040. (University Microfilms No. 380803)

National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association. (1996). *Standards for the English language arts.*

New York State Education Department. (1996). *Learning Standards for English Language Arts.* Albany, NY.

New York State Education Department. (1996). *Scoring Rubric for New York State Elementary English Language Arts Assessment.* Kadamus, JA: Author.

New York State Education Department. (1999). *Guidance on the 1998-1999 new state assessment system* [Brochure]. Kadamus, JA: Author.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

New York State Testing Program. (1999). English *Language Arts Assessment*. Albany, NY.

New York State Testing Program. (2000). *Grade 4 English Language Arts Rubric Chart for Reading/Writing*. Albany, NY.

New York State Testing Program. (2000). Writing *Mechanics Rubric*. Albany, NY.

Ogle, D. S. (1986). K-W-L. A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text. *The Reading Teacher, 39*, 564-570.

Reynolds, S., & Hart, J. (1990). Cognitive mapping and word processing: Aids to story revision. *Journal of Experimental Education, 58*, 273-279.

Schafer, W. D. (1992). Analysis of pretest and posttest designs. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 25, 2-4.

Sinatra, R. (2000). Teaching learners to think, read, and write more effectively in content subjects. *The Clearing House, 73*, 266-273.

Sinatra, R., & Pizzo, J. (1992). Mapping the road to reading comprehension. *Teaching K-8, 23*, 102-105.

Sinatra, R., Stahl-Gemake, J., & Wyche Morgan, N. (1986). Using semantic mapping after reading to organize and write original discourse. *Journal of Reading, 30*, 4-13.

Troyer, S. (1994). *The effects of three instructional conditions in text structure on upper elementary students' reading comprehension and writing performance*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Washington, V. M. (1988). Report writing: A practical application of semantic mapping. *Teacher Educator, 24*, 24-30.

Watts, S. M. (1993). *Preparing our preservice and inservice teachers in the way we expect them to teach*. Paper prepared for the 38th Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, San Antonio, TX.

Weisberg, R., & Balajthy, E. (1987). *Effects of training in constructing graphic organizers on disabled readers' summarization and recognition of expository text structure*. Paper presented at the 37th Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, Clearwater, FL.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix A. General Writing Rubric

Quality	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Meaning: extent to which response exhibits understanding and interpretation of task and text(s)	•fulfills all or most requirements of tasks •addresses theme or key elements of text •shows an insightful interpretation of text •makes many connections beyond the text	•fulfills many requirements of tasks •addresses many key elements of text •shows a predominantly literal interpretation of text •makes some connections	•fulfills some requirements of tasks •addresses basic elements of text, but connections may be weak •shows some misunderstanding of the text or reflect gaps in students understanding of text as a whole	•fulfills few requirements of tasks •misses basic elements of text •shows evidence that student understood only parts of text •makes few, if any, relevant connections
Development: extent to which ideas are elaborated, using specific and relevant evidence from the text(s)	•develops ideas fully with thorough elaboration •makes effective use of relevant and accurate examples from text	•may be brief, with little elaboration, but is sufficiently developed to address the topic •provides many relevant examples and details from text •may include some minor inaccuracies	•may begin to address the topic but is not sufficiently developed •may provide some relevant text-based examples and details •may include some inaccurate information	•may include a few accurate details
Organization: extent to which response exhibits direction, shape, and coherence	•establishes and maintains a clear focus •shows a logical, coherent sequence of ideas through use of appropriate transitions or other devices	•is generally focused, though may include some irrelevant details •shows a clear attempt at organization	•may attempt to establish a focus •shows some attempt at organization •may include some irrelevant details	•may focus on minor details or lack a focus •shows little or no organization
Language Use: extent to which response reveals awareness of audience and purpose through effective use of words, sentence structure, and sentence variety	•is fluent and easy to read, with vivid language and a sense of engagement or voice •is stylistically sophisticated, using varied sentence structure and challenging vocabulary	•is readable, with some sense of engagement or voice •uses some sentence variety and basic vocabulary	•is mostly readable, but with little sense of engagement or voice •uses only simple sentences and basic vocabulary	•is often repetitive, with little or no sense of engagement or voice •uses minimal vocabulary
Mechanics: extent to which response demonstrates control of the conventions of written English	•has few, if any, errors and none that interfere with comprehension •grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing are essentially correct •any misspellings are minor or repetitive and occur primarily when student takes risks withsophisticated vocabulary	•contains some errors of grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, or spelling that may interfere somewhat with readability but do not substantially interfere with readability or comprehension	•may contain many errors of grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling that interfere with readability and/or comprehension	• errors make the writing incomprehensible

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B. Critical Thinking Rubric

Quality	4	3	2	1
Understanding	•includes a broad range of critical information explaining about the famous person	•includes critical information explaining about the famous person with some elaboration and explanation	•presents some information explaining about the famous person, but may be missing critical information	•presents information with limited or no explanation
Analysis	•goes beyond the factual information presented in the text to interpret and analyze	•contains some evidence of interpretation and analysis	•may contain a completely literal interpretation of text	•may contain factual errors and/or misinterpretations
Idea Development	•develops and elaborates ideas clearly and fully using many suppportive and relevant details from the text •draws meaningful connections between ideas	•develops ideas clearly with some supporting details from text •draws some meaningful connections	•ideas are stated simply with few supporting details from the text •may wander from the topic or task •draws few meaninful connections	•develops ideas in fragmentary manner without using supporting details from the text and/or includes random information and personal details unrelated to the topic •may be off-topic or task completely •draws little or no meaningful connections

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix C. Student Questionnaire

Name ______________________________ Teacher ______________________________

Organizational Structure ________________ (outline, graphic organizer, or I-chart)

Answer the following questions using this key:
1 = not at all
2 = somewhat
3 = very
4 = extremely

How helpful was the organizational structure you used for your THINKING while researching and writing your report? 1 2 3 4

How helpful was the organizational structure you used for actually WRITING your research report? 1 2 3 4

How likely is it that you will use this organizational structure again to help you write a research report? 1 2 3 4

On the lines below, please EXPLAIN HOW your organizational structure helped with your thinking and writing of your research report.

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

Appendix D. List of Famous Americans in History

Susan B. Anthony
Benedict Arnold
Elizabeth Blackwell
George Washington Carver
Marie Curie
Emily Dickinson
Frederick Douglass
Amelia Earhart
Thomas Alva Edison
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Benjamin Franklin
John Glenn
Lyndon B. Johnson
Helen Keller
John F. Kennedy
Martin Luther King
Charles Lindberg
Rosa Parks
Molly Pitcher
Colin Powell
Eleanor Roosevelt
Sacajawea
Deborah Sampson Gannet
Harry S. Truman
Harriet Tubman

MOVING ADOLESCENT MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN TOWARD THE PATH OF EDUCATED INDEPENDENCE

Thesis Award

Joan Scott Curtis

Texas Woman's University

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether, through a reading program in an existing parenting education class, teenage mothers would make connections between parenting and literacy education and how these connections would be reflected in changed behaviors. Included were the importance of reading to young children, characteristics of good storybooks, and how to read a book to a young child. Books were shared by reading aloud, and five books were given to each participant.

As revealed in the data of journals, initial questionnaires, and post-intervention informal interviews, several girls made a connection between parenting and literacy education. They realized consistent storybook reading was improving their own reading abilities and that very young children do learn language from books. By taking responsibility for her own child's education, each girl who stayed involved in the program has begun reading more to her child as well as involving the child in the neighborhood library and homework activities. These girls successfully made the leap.

Introduction

Many challenges face adolescent girls, particularly Hispanic girls, as they live the role of students in today's society. Popular culture sends messages that looks are a top priority for girls, and in many families, girls must work to put food on the table. Even for those girls who are interested in being good students, studies show dramatic gender differences in classrooms (American Association of University Women, 1992). Despite the importance of education to the Hispanic community, Hispanic girls have the lowest high school graduation rate of any other racial or ethnic group (Ginorio & Huston, 2000). Having a baby during adolescence proves too daunting for many teenage mothers who are more likely to drop out of school and have lower levels of educational attainment than women who postpone childbearing (Maynard, 1996; Scott-Jones, 1991). Schools need to find ways to deal meaningfully with stereotypes and societal issues like teen pregnancy that impact school performance (Ginorio & Huston, 2000).

Problem

As they struggle with motherhood, many teenage mothers do not understand that there is a connection between "good parenting" and academic skills. One critical area where motherhood and school come together is literacy. The mother is a child's first teacher (Trelease, 1995), helping her child learn language patterns and social skills. By acquiring for herself the skills of storybook sharing, the teen mother can develop a love for reading in her child, leading to more exposure to and experience with books. This solid foundation in literacy is one of the most critical building blocks for success in school.

Pregnancy and parenting are major reasons why females leave school (Lopez, 1987; McGee, 1988). Their failure to finish with at least a high school education has a variety of implications. Although the number of live births to teenagers has gradually decreased in recent years (Easlely, 2000), families started by teenage mothers represent nearly half of families receiving welfare benefits (U. S. Health, Education, & Human Services, 1995). When compared to children of older mothers, the children of these young mothers seem to be at a developmental disadvantage (Chase-Landsdale, Brooks-Gunn, & Palkoff, 1991). Adolescent mothers prefer physical rather than visual or auditory stimulation in interactions with their babies (Landy & Walsh, 1988). Physical stimulation provides warmth and closeness, but lacks the properties necessary to develop language, both receptive and expressive, as well as visual acuity and coordination. Delayed language skills and poor coordination are two of the difficulties frequently faced by children of teenage mothers (Landy & Walsh, 1988). Staying in school reduces teenage mothers' chances of poverty and increases their chances of self-sufficiency (McGee & Blank, 1989).

Research Questions

My study implemented a literacy program for adolescent mothers who were presently enrolled in high school. Specifically, I asked

1. Through book reading programs in the school, what connections do teenage mothers make between parenting and education?
2. How do these connections become evident in the behavior of the teenage mother?

As these young mothers came to realize that all formal education is built on a solid foundation in literacy, they also began to see the relationship between their own patterns of reading and what they hope for their children.

Setting and Context of Study

This qualitative study was conducted in an existing high school parenting education class during regular school hours. The 17 participants, ages 14–20, have children ranging in age from 2 months to 32 months. Each participant is literate in the English language as measured on the Woodcock-Munoz ESL Placement Test.

The school is an inner city Title I high school of 1500 students located in the southwestern part of the United States, with over 85% Hispanic students. The graduating class of 2000 numbered 192 and began as a freshman class numbering 640, which highlights dropout concerns (Public Education Information Management Systems Data, 2001).

One-and-one half-hour class sessions were conducted on nine days in February and March of 2001, with three days to six days between sessions. We used *Reading Begins at Home* (Butler & Clay, 1987) as a textbook. Class content included the importance of reading to children, tips on reading to a young child, characteristics of good children's books, how to get books, suggestions for developmentally appropriate books, a "how-to" videotape (Trelease, 1995), and reading behaviors during storybook sharing. I emphasized four reading steps: 1) Get set; 2) Give meaning; 3) Build bridges; and 4) Step back (Neuman & Daly, 1993). Although the children of these students were not old enough to participate in all four steps, we repeatedly practiced the first two steps to help them realize that many repetitions are needed before the child can assume responsibility for her own learning. The parent's repeated modeling of getting set, giving meaning, and building bridges helps a child focus and relate the story to his own experience so the parent can step back.

Participants and I kept reflective journals during the program, although they wrote in their journals only when I requested. Students responded to my questions during the times between sessions. I asked them to respond to the following: Did you ever think reading to a baby was important? Why or why not? After reading these storybooks to your baby each day, write in your journal a description of the experience—what is your baby doing? What are you doing? When you think about school, what has been difficult for you that you hope will be easier for your child? What do you think can make that difference? As you think about all we have discussed over the past few weeks, what has been the most important to you? What do I need to do differently if I continue to talk about reading in the parenting classes? What would you have liked to do or find out that you did not get the chance to inquire about or do? What else do you want me to know?

Before beginning the study, I spent many hours in this parenting class observing and occasionally joining class discussions so the girls would feel comfortable with me. Prior to Day One, I described the proposed study and asked the girls to complete a demographic questionnaire without identifying themselves, and to answer questions regarding reading and school habits, where identities were known. Designated questions, which they answered in writing initially, were answered in an informal interview following the last day of the program. My biggest concern was the sporadic attendance of the participants. Attendance ranged from 20 to 9 with only 2 students present during the entire program. According to the current teacher of the parenting class who has taught this class for the past ten years, attendance is traditionally a major problem in the parenting class.

The Mothers' Stories

Seventeen girls began the reading program. Thirteen were enrolled in the parenting class, and four girls were in the Reconnection Program, targeting overage ninth and tenth graders who have dropped out of school. The girls' ages generally ranged from 17 to 19, although one was only 14. Sixteen of the girls were Hispanic, and one was African-American, reflecting the school's racial make-up. More than half the students were single, and one was divorced. Eight girls were seniors, and the remainder girls were divided among freshman, sophomore, and junior grades. Ten of the girls lived with the father of their baby, while six lived with their parents. Half of the girls had babies less than six months of age. One of the students had two children. Ten reported spending between five and six hours a day with their babies, and four more reported spending more than six hours a day. All but one of the girls reported that a family member cares for the baby. Only one girl reported that the baby's father had no involvement in the baby's life; other fathers participated weekly to daily. Just four of them reported having jobs outside of home and school. My results focused primarily on the interviews of Alejandra, Ana, Veronica, Aida, Vanessa, Julia, Silvia, Heidy, and Marisela (not their real names), because they were the most consistent in attendance, completed both the initial questionnaire and the final interview, and turned in their journal notes.

Veronica was 16 years old and had a five month old son. Veronica and her son lived with her baby's father and her older sister. She also had two older sisters and two older brothers. Veronica came to the United States from Mexico when she was nine years old to live with her older sister; her parents remained in Mexico, and she had not seen them in more than seven years. Veronica, who was a junior, had been my student in a reading class two years ago. She wrote in her journal, "I want to thank you for all the love that you have give [*sic*] me, is like [*sic*] I have someone like my mom with me."

Alejandra, 19, was also from Mexico and had been in this country for six years. She and her 16 month old son lived with the baby's father. Alejandra was a senior and planned to graduate in May. Having lost her mother at an early age, Alejandra told of instantly becoming the mother to her younger siblings when she was only seven years old.

Aida was 18, had a nine month old son, and lived with the baby's father. Also from Mexico, Aida had only been here three years. Even with her limited English, she had earned enough credits to be a senior, passed all three sections of the TAAS Exit Exam and expected to graduate in May.

Ana, 19, was married, and they had a four month old daughter. Ana was a senior and will graduate in May. She is originally from Mexico and had been in this country for six years.

Silvia was 15 and has lived in the United States all of her life. She was the mother of a 18 month old daughter, and they both lived with Silvia's mother, although Silvia and her daughter's father were planning to get an apartment together soon. Silvia was a sophomore.

Marisela had a son who was 14 months old. They lived with her mother and her younger brother and two younger sisters. At 16, Marisela made the decision and broke all ties with the father of her baby because there were too many problems; they do not even talk anymore. She was from Mexico, has been in the United States for nine years, and was a sophomore in high school. Marisela wrote that she "has been very happy here."

Vanessa ws 18, lived with her 18 month old daughter, her mother and stepfather, her two younger brothers, a younger sister, and the 19 year old father of her baby. Originally from Mexico, Vanessa and her family came here six years ago "because my dad used to hit mi [*sic*] mom." She was now a junior and was the only one of her freshmen group of six friends who was still in school.

Heidy, 19, was married and had a daughter who is 22 months old. Heidy had been in this country for four years, and both she and her husband came from Mexico. Heidy spoke no English upon arriving but quickly assimilated into school, learning English there and through watching television. She only spoke English at school and used Spanish at home and in the community. She was a senior and was to graduate in May. Her husband had quit school and worked to support the family.

Julia was 16 and was born in El Paso but spent most summers in Mexico. She was in her fifth month of pregnancy. Julia lived with her parents and younger sister, all of whom spoke English and valued education. In the fall of 2000, an uncle came from Mexico and moved into the home of Julia's parents. Julia reported that this uncle spoke no English, allowed no English spoken in the home, and belittled Julia and her sister for their dedication to their schooling. The uncle had been there three months when Julia got pregnant.

Constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used with data sources including student journals, my journal, transcripts of informal interviews, demographic surveys, and written reflections on the program from the parenting education teacher and a visiting parenting educational specialist. Both the teacher and the specialist were present during several sessions.

I looked for differences in both knowledge and attitude of sharing storybooks with their children, illustrated in number of children's books owned, number of trips to the library, book choices, and reasons for choosing. Through the initial questionnaire and the final informal interview, I also analyzed the students' reading behaviors at home, particularly changes in reading habits.

Connections between Education and Parenting

Initially, three girls said they liked to read; one did not like to read, and four sometimes liked to read. The only reading materials they listed were teen magazines and parenting magazines. All but two had books at home: one of those was Marisela, who said she did not like to read. They all thought reading to young children was important because it "makes them smarter" and "helps them learn faster." However, they all reported reading to their babies "sometimes" or "not at all."

All students initially answered that reading was easy for them; however, Ana did not consider herself a good reader because "I can't read." By the end of the study, she could read the storybooks and thought they were helping her read her textbooks "without so much stopping." Marisela did not consider herself a good reader because she did not like to read. In the beginning, none of the girls considered her family a "reading family." By the end of the study, several girls said they were on their way to being a "reading family" because they now make sure they read together with their babies.

All of the students enjoyed school. Favorite subjects were math, English, parenting, and geography, and favorite teachers were described as caring, patient, "helps me out," and "explains things step by step." These girls hoped to be doctors, lawyers, psychologists, police officers, teachers, and "something that involves computers." Most found qualities that they liked about themselves, including being patient, smart, a good mother, and a good listener. The qualities they disliked about themselves were typical of teenagers: being fat, jealous, or easily mad. Ana said, "I feel like I can't accomplish what I want."

Activities enjoyed by mother and child included laughing and playing; nobody initially said anything about family activities. This had changed by the end of the study when several girls reported that their families now enjoyed reading storybooks together with the babies. These mothers want their children to be doctors, lawyers, happy, and "what she chooses."

Initially, the girls who reported reading to their babies read Barney books, Precious Moments books, and the Bible. Nobody described a reading session. Many reported owning many children's books, from 10 to 30 to "a lot." These numbers did not change in final interviews.

In her final interview, Veronica reported that she valued being a better mother now because she was really helping her five-month-old son by reading to him. Veronica actively asked questions during classes, like "Is it okay if I read books in Spanish to him?" The day that I handed out the books and book bags, she came later to ask if I had any extra books because her sister was pregnant and "I'm telling Mayra everything you tell us so she will know she has to read to her baby." Veronica wrote in her journal, "I got so excited when I saw my baby paying so much attention to me, that I can read two pages and he look [*sic*] at the pictures like he really know [*sic*] that I'm reading to him." Another day, following introductions to *Goodnight Moon* (Brown, 1991) and *Love You Forever* (Munsch, 1945), Veronica wrote, ". . . I would like to find them [books] so I could read them to my baby, not for me, but for my baby so he can be smarter than me."

Vanessa, in her final interview, indicated the realization that babies learn language from books. "You know, Miss, Rachel start [*sic*] to talk more, to say more and describe things. I don't know Miss, but I think she is coming to be more smart [*sic*]. She can say more words than my brother and he is two years old." As a final reflection, Vanessa wrote, "Well, the thing is that I thought you, the children had to have like three years to start reading because when there [*sic*] little they don't know what you [*sic*] talking about but now I see that I was wrong because I see how my baby enjoy [*sic*] when I read to her."

Changes in Reading Behavior

Six of the girls initially reported having library cards, but nobody went to the library very often. During the final interview, Silvia, Heidy, Aida, and Vanessa told me they had been walking together, with their children, every

Saturday morning for three weeks. Silvia and Heidy had even taken their children; girls aged 20 months and 22 months, to the library once for bedtime story hour. The little girls loved going in their pajamas, and Silvia and Heidy hoped to make it a monthly night out with their daughters.

Reading to their children went from sometimes to everyday, even if it was just reading a textbook out loud. Aida initially had concern about her nine-month-old son's active personality; "He won't stay still for more than two minutes." In the final interview, she told me that he was beginning to sit still for four and five minute intervals now and that she has more patience to read and knows when to stop. Alejandra wrote in one of her final reflections, "I want my son to speak already so we can read together and understand each other. Since I started reading to my child I have notice [*sic*] that he knows more word's [*sic*] and he's all into books. I like it."

At the beginning of the study, none of the girls checked out books from my classroom children's library. The week after the program ended, five girls took home a total of eight books. At the next class meeting two days later, these books were returned and the same girls checked out six more books. Alejandra reported to me the next week that the girls had traded books among themselves and would return them the next day.

The books read to the babies changed from Barney and Precious Moments books to the books I gave them: *Goodnight Moon* (Brown, 1991), *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1994), and *Tome dePaola's Mother Goose* (dePaola, 1985). Alejandra, Veronica, Aida, Vanessa, and Silvia also could tell me in the final interview that they did not worry about completing a book. They took their time and pointed out pictures and talked about colors and made references to the same colors in the room décor. Vanessa added in her interview that she was reading more often since she received the books [that I gave each girl] because "I didn't know what kind of book to read her." Alejandra excitedly told me of the night she grabbed her textbooks, and her son grabbed his board books and sat down and began baby talk. She did not skip a beat when she told me, "He was reading."

Implications for Practice

1. Utilize a literacy expert, who can be someone different for the girls to hear instead of the "same old teacher." Before sharing information about choosing storybooks or reading storybooks, I began the class with why it was important to read to young children, and likened it to talking to babies even though they do not understand what we are saying. This made sense to these young mothers and had caused them to want to hear more from the reading expert. After the program was completed, parenting students asked the

teacher when I could come back. They also came to my room to ask questions about reading.

2. Expose the students to the research, which supports early reading. I stressed from the beginning that it was never too early to start reading to a baby, nor was it ever too late. The girls were interested in what Jim Trelease had to say, as well as the story of Cushla told by Dorothy Butler in her book *Cushla and Her Books* (1980). The stories and research revealed by these authors provided the segue for rich class discussion.
3. Be nonjudgmental because these girls already have too many people blaming them for something. In everything I did, I let these girls know that I was not there to judge them or talk about what they had failed to do. I was merely there to give them insight into what they could start doing now and now was a good time to start. The girls sensed the genuine interest and were always glad to see me enter the classroom.
4. Provide materials to make the statement that reading is so important, we'll help you get the books. Maintaining a collection of storybooks in the classroom has resulted in the girls taking advantage of having the books at school and checking them out to read to their children.
5. Do not tell; show. Model strategies with a baby. My eight-month-old granddaughter came to school one day with her mother so we could demonstrate storybook reading. All the information the girls had heard was brought into clear focus with Alyssa. Her mother, reading with inflection and pointing to pictures and colors, had Alyssa's attention by the third page. Comments from the girls included: "Did you see her turn the page?" "She didn't want down when Miss was holding her and just plain reading, but she wasn't looking at the book either. But her mother sure got her attention."
6. Plan ahead and stay with the schedule. Girls in the Reconnection Program (an alternative educational setting on campus, with irregular hours and individual work) had expressed interest in this phase of the parenting class and had chosen to come to the first session. After the first session, the schedule for the program changed on two occasions, but those schedule changes did not get into the hands of the Reconnection students. They came one more time to the parenting class expecting me to be there, and when I was not, they did not return. By scheduling in advance and getting that schedule to different people, student parents in nontraditional programs might find their way back into the classroom for a little while. Since

Reconnection students did initially express an interest in the reading program, with advance notice and consistency, a program like this one might hold their interest.

7. Be a mentor and maintain on-going relationships so the girls know the interest, both in them and in their babies, is genuine. Many of these girls are hungry for adult wisdom, and they have sought me to share stories about reading to their babies. Three girls have already signed up for a storybook sharing hour that I will have every other week during the summer. When I am on hall duty, they stop and talk about their babies and reading.

The human costs of ignoring the educational needs of adolescent mothers are high: economic hardship for mothers, and children who are prone to failure. Helping these students can have positive effects on two generations. It behooves educators to intervene with programs that encourage adolescent mothers to stay in school; this points them in the direction of independence and decreases the chances that they and their families will remain forever dependent on society's political agenda of welfare. Through my study, I learned that there are teenage mothers who have the drive to break the cycle of low literacy, low education, and low income. Nine young women now know something about literacy to help their children be better students and avoid some of the struggles that these young mothers faced. Veronica's statement reflects a feeling shared by these strong and very special young women, ". . . so I could read them to my baby, not for me, but for my baby so he can be smarter than me [*sic*]."

References

American Association of University Women. (1992). *How schools shortchange girls* (Executive Summary Report). Newton, IA.

Brown, M. W. (1991). *Goodnight Moon* (Board ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Butler, D. (1980). *Cushla and Her Books.* Boston: The Horn Book.

Butler, D., & Clay, M. (1987). *Reading Begins at Home* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Carle, E. (1994). *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Board ed.). New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers.

Chase-Landsdale, P., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Palkoff, R. (1991). Research and programs for adolescent mothers: missing links and future promises. *Family Relations,* 40, 396-403.

DePaola, T. (1985). *Tome dePaola's Mother Goose.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Easley, J. (Ed.) (2000). *Beyond ABC: Growing up in Dallas County.* Dallas, TX: Children's Medical Center.

Ginorio, A., & Huston, M. (2000). *Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can: Latinas in School.* American Association of University Women. Newton, IA.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research.* New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Landy, S., & Walsh, S. (1988). Early intervention with high-risk teenage mothers and their infants. *Early Child Development and Care,* 37, 27-46.

Lopez, N. (1987). Hispanic Teenage Pregnancy: Overview and Implications. Washington, D. C.: Policy Analysis Center, Office of Research, Advocacy, and Legislation, National Council of La Raza. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 289 943).

Maynard, R. (Ed.). (1996). *Kids Having Kids.* New York, NY: Catalyst Institute. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 409 389)

McGee, E. (1988). Improving Educational Opportunities for Pregnant and Parenting Students. New York, NY: The Support Center for Educational Equity for Young Mothers. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 307 343)

McGee, E., & Blank, S. (1989). A Stitch in Time: Helping Young Mothers Complete High School. Washington, D. C.: Academy for Educational Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 317 914)

Munsch, R. (1945). *Love You Forever.* Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books Ltd.

Neuman, S. B., & Daly, P. (1993). Guiding young children: A family literacy approach. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Charleston, S. C.

Scott-Jones, D. (1991). Adolescent childbearing: Risks and resilience. *Education and Urban Society,* 24, 53-64.

Texas Education Agency. (2000). Public Education Information System Data.

Trelease, J. (1995). *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (4th ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

Trelease, J. (Penfield Productions, Producer). (1995). *Reading Aloud, Making Books into Friends, not Enemies* [Film]. (Available from Reading Tree Productions, 51 Arvesta Street, Springfield, MA 01118-1239)

U. S. Health, Education, & Human Services. (1995). *Teenage mothers on welfare* (GAO Publication No. B-259612). Washington, D. C.

Appendix A. Participant Information Questionnaire

Please place a check by the answer which most closely describes you and your situation. **Do not put your name on the questionnaire or identify yourself in any other manner. The return of your completed questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in this research.**

1. What is your age?
_____ 14 _____15 _____16 _____17 _____18 _____19 _____20

2. What is your race?
_____Hispanic _____African-American _____Anglo _____Asian
_____Native American _____Bi-racial _____Other (specify)

3. What is your marital status?
_____Single _____Married _____Divorced

4. What is your classification in school?
_____Freshman _____Sophomore _____Junior _____Senior

5. With whom do you live?
_____Parents _____Father of baby _____Boyfriend _____Friend
_____Grandparent _____Older sibling _____Other (specify)

6. How old is your baby?
_____Less than 6 mos. _____6–9 months _____ 10–11 months
_____12–15 months _____16–18 months _____19–23 months
_____2–2-1/2years _____2-1/2–3 years _____Older than 3 years

7. How much time do you spend with your baby while he/she is awake each day?
_____Less than 2 hours _____2–4 hours
_____5–6 hours _____More than 6 hours

8. Who cares for your baby while you are in school?
_____Your parent(s) _____Parent(s) of baby's father
_____Other family member _____Paid sitter in home
_____Daycare _____Other

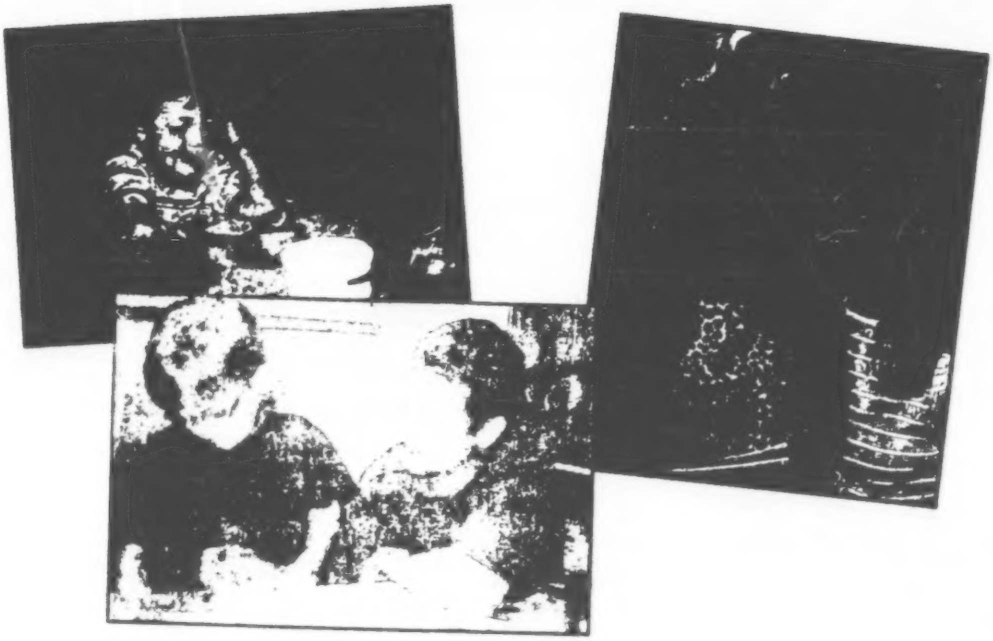
9. How much does the baby's father participate in the baby's life—help with care, participate in decisions concerning the baby, contribute monetarily?
_____Daily _____Several times a week _____Weekly
_____Monthly _____Almost never _____Never

10. Do you work outside school and your home?
_____Yes _____No

Appendix B. Interview Questions

* Designates use of question again in post-intervention interview.

1. Do you like to read? Why or why not?
2. What kinds of books or magazines do you like to read?
3. Do you have any books at home?
4. *Do you think reading is important? Why or why not?
5. *Do you think reading to young children is important? Why or why not?
6. Did you read much as a child? Do you remember anyone reading to you?
7. *What do you do when you're reading and you come to something that you don't know or understand?
8. *Do you ever go to the library? Which ones? How often?
9. *Is reading easy or hard for you? Why?
10. *Do you consider yourself to be a good reader? Why or why not?
11. *Is your family a "reading" family?
12. *Is there a time and place for you to read at home?
13. Do you enjoy school? If not, when did you begin to dislike school? Can you remember what caused you to feel this way?
14. What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
15. Can you describe your favorite teacher? What do you like most about him/her?
16. Can you describe your least favorite teacher? What do you dislike most about him/her?
17. Everybody has hopes and dreams as a child. When were young, what did you want to be when you grew up? Has that changed over the years?
18. *Tell me three things that you like most about yourself.
19. What are the three worst things you think about yourself?
20. Tell me about your relationship with your child. What do you like about being a parent?
21. *What do you and your child enjoy doing together?
22. *What does your family enjoy doing together?
23. What would you like your child to be when he/she grows up?
24. How do you discipline your child? Does it work?
25. *Do you read to your child? If so, how often?
26. *What kinds of books do you read to him/her? Describe what you do when you read to her/him.
27. *Does your child own any books? How many?



THE FACES OF LITERACY TEACHERS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COMPARING THE CAREER CHOICES AND EXPECTATIONS OF INSERVICE AND PRESERVICE TEACHERS: A CASE SURVEY

Amy R. Hoffman

John Carroll University

Evangeline V. Newton

University of Akron

◆

Abstract

To inform teacher recruitment and retention recommendations, 293 preservice and inservice teachers, enrolled in literacy classes at two universities, completed an open-ended survey. Qualitative analysis of the responses about their career choices, satisfactions, and frustrations, yielded some interesting differences between the two groups. Although both selected teaching because of an internal motivation to "nurture" and "make a difference," preservice teachers wanted and expected more career status than their inservice peers. Both groups expressed frustration about "parent/family issues," but only preservice teachers indicated a serious concern about "student behavior." Unlike most inservice teachers, preservice teachers had considered other careers before selecting teaching. Survey findings provide new insights to guide teacher recruitment efforts.

By 2006, American schools will enroll 54.6 million children (Meek, 1998). The teaching work force will need to add between 325,000 and 600,000 new teachers to accommodate the projected increase in students (Meek, 1998). Moreover, growth in enrollment will coincide with the imminent retirement of "baby boomers." Because of this, considerable attention has focused recently on the need to recruit new teachers for the twenty-first century.

While demand is increasing, retention of quality teachers has also become problematic. In fact, Connolly (2000) writes that, "approximately 50 percent of teachers with less than five years experience are leaving teaching while up to 40 percent of new teachers leave teaching within their first seven years" (p. 56). The attrition rate is much higher for teachers who are 20-29 years old (Lucksinger, 2000). This is particularly alarming since one-fourth of the current teaching population is age 50 or older and expected to retire within the next ten years (Lucksinger, 2000).

Furthermore, unlike their predecessors, new teachers will face strenuous calls for accountability. State legislatures have implemented standardized measures that seek to document not only improved student performance but also to enhance teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge (Olson, 2000; State Policy Updates, 2000). Many states have already implemented rigorous new teacher education standards that require additional coursework, testing, and even first-year mentoring by degree-granting institutions. To meet these demands, the teaching profession must indeed represent "the best and the brightest" on university campuses. Probing the perceptions of those who have already entered the profession may provide insights that will support efforts to recruit and retain high quality teachers.

This article reports results of the second phase of an extended study of literacy teacher career choices and job satisfaction. An earlier study surveyed veteran literacy educators at a state language arts conference to determine why they had chosen teaching and what aspects of their professional life they found most rewarding and most frustrating (Hoffman & Newton, 2000). This study asks similar questions of preservice and inservice teachers enrolled in literacy courses at an urban or suburban university. Why did they decide to teach? What do they believe has been or will be the most satisfying or frustrating part of their careers? What similarities and differences appear in the professional expectations of each group?

Prior research on why people choose and/or leave the teaching profession provides some useful insights to guide current recruitment and retention efforts. In 1975, Lortie (1975) found that people chose teaching because of a desire to work with children, share knowledge, continue learning, and serve others. Lortie also found that poor salary and inadequate support from administrators were the most frequently cited reasons for leaving. Despite demographic or experiential differences, most survey-based research conducted over the last twenty-five years continues to identify these same issues as critical to teacher job satisfaction or frustration.

Some studies have drawn a distinction between externally and internally motivated factors. Extrinsic rewards include tangible benefits e.g., salary; intrinsic rewards include intangible benefits e.g., making a difference. Results from all studies drawing this distinction clearly agree that intrinsic rewards are more important than extrinsic rewards to teachers who express a high degree of job satisfaction (Latham, 1998). Cockburn (2000), for example, conducted in-depth interviews of twelve primary school teachers in England who were selected from a larger survey because they indicated high job satisfaction. Although the teachers worked in a variety of settings and represented a range of age and experience, all cited being with children as their primary source of job satisfaction. They also noted the importance of collegial relationships with co-workers and of appropriate professional challenges, viewed by these teachers as growth opportunities. Salary and status were not important issues for them.

Similarly, a nationwide study from Public Agenda notes that even though new teachers believe they are underpaid, "most new teachers say they would sacrifice higher pay if it meant they could work in schools with well-behaved students, motivated colleagues, and supportive administrators" (Wadsworth, 2000, p. 33). In addition, new teachers underscored the importance of parents as educational partners who they sadly believed were "more often than not, missing in action" (Wadsworth, 2000, p. 34).

Probing the motivation of those who choose teaching as a second career provides additional insights. Dieterich and Panton (1996) surveyed 90 post-baccalaureate students seeking teacher certification. They found that the "desire to make a difference," "personal fulfillment," and the "need to change society" were the most frequently cited reasons for their career change (p. 254). Similarly, Serow (1993) interviewed 26 second-career teachers and found that 24 of them cited pursuit of personal satisfaction as a significant factor in their career change. Serow (1993) speculates that teaching may offer a kind of "psychological utilitarianism–by teaching your child to read…I add to my own supply of…self-esteem" (p. 203). In both studies, salary did not appear to provide a significant incentive for career change, a finding in other research as well (Perie & Baker, 1997). Consequently, recent studies of second-career teachers support the validity of a cumulative body of research that identifies intrinsic motivation as critical to job satisfaction (Burke, 2000).

Research Design

Site and Participants

Using a qualitative case survey paradigm (Merriam, 1998), this study surveyed two-hundred and ninety-three students enrolled in eleven literacy courses at two Midwestern universities. University A is a large urban state school while University B is a much smaller private school located in an urban suburb. Participants included 140 inservice teachers whose years of experience ranged from less than a year to over thirty years, although about a third (44) had taught less than five years. Most (116) were classroom teachers, the remaining identified themselves as specialists or tutors (19) or other role (5). Although not asked about career goals, the literacy courses in which these inservice teachers were enrolled were part of literacy master's degree programs and could also be applied towards a reading endorsement. Many of the 153 preservice teachers surveyed (86) were seniors planning to student teach in the following semester. In addition, participants included fourteen post-baccalaureate teacher certification students who held liberal arts degrees. Most of the preservice teachers (116) indicated that they would seek positions in elementary or early childhood classrooms, the others were headed for middle childhood licensure (21), secondary level teaching (13), or did not indicate an age or grade level (3).

Data Collection and Analysis

While most of the studies reviewed used an instrument, which posited choices for each question, primary data for this study were written responses to a questionnaire developed by the researchers (Appendix). Open-ended questions were posed in order to generate unfettered responses pertinent to the research questions. Surveys were anonymous and respondents were instructed to write as much or as little as they wished. A similar survey had been used as data in the earlier study (Hoffman & Newton, 2000). New demographic questions were added to distinguish respondents from the earlier study.

Data analysis focused on three broad research questions: 1) What do preservice and inservice teachers enrolled in literacy courses identify as the most important reasons behind their decision to teach? 2) How does each group articulate professional frustrations and satisfaction? 3) What incentives do they believe might attract high quality candidates to teaching?

Like all qualitative research, this case survey did not posit a hypothesis. Instead, researchers sought to develop categories as themes or patterns emerged from the data. Consequently, the data analysis process was inductive, based on identifying patterns of response within and among subjects. Drawing on Strauss and Corbin (1998) "constant comparative" method, researchers identified broad domains reflecting belief patterns from which theories about the research questions might be developed. Researchers worked independently first to identify themes as they emerged from all the data. For example, the following actual responses, though citing different frustrations, all related to the theme of "workplace issues": non-teaching duties, long meetings resulting in more long meetings, and no paid time for sharing between teachers. The theme of "better working conditions" which emerged from the question about ways to attract more high quality candidates, represented the following sample responses: a safer working environment, support with grading and paperwork, a better-equipped building, and more mentoring.

Next, the researchers developed a case record for each research question, by comparing incipient categories and resolving discrepancies in interpretation. This process of independent and then collaborative category generation was used to provide some triangulation (Merriam, 1998). In addition, two graduate students (one from each institution) were asked to check category plausibility. Each independently reviewed data and agreed that the categories developed did represent the data collected. Their analysis provided further triangulation through inter-rater reliability based on their holistic understanding that the categories provided a reasonable explanation of the research questions (Merriam, 1998). Results were then contextualized through analysis of demographic information.

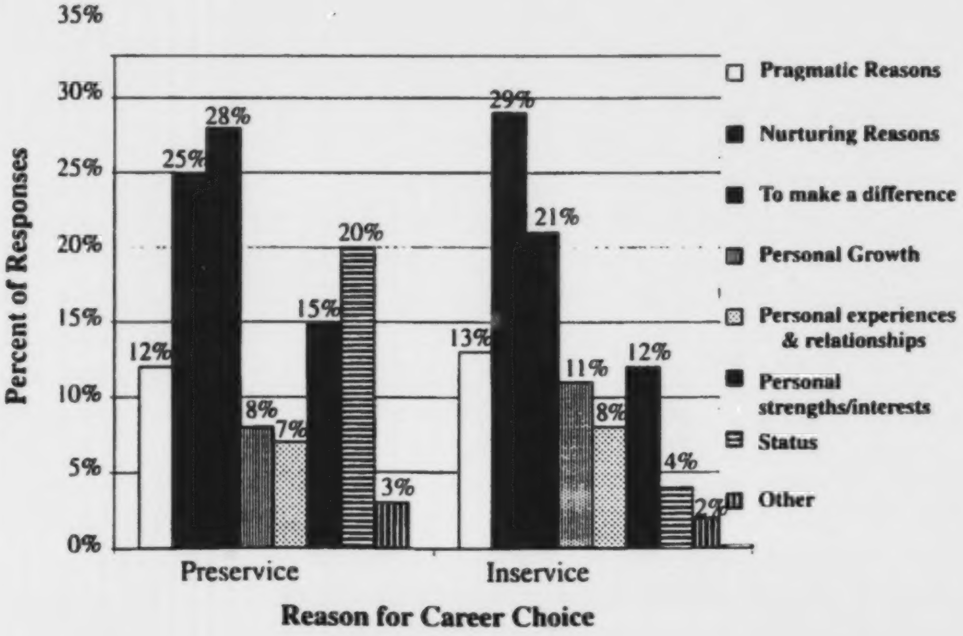
Findings

Why Choose Teaching?

Survey results can be organized around the focus questions guiding this study. Responses of the preservice and inservice teachers revealed some interesting patterns within and between the two groups.

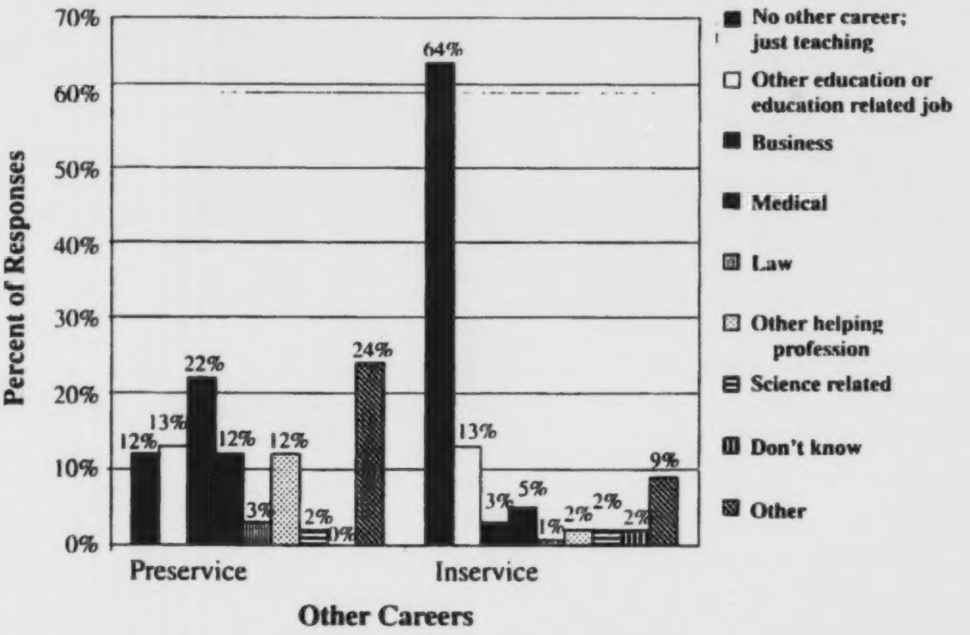
The categories (with a sample response) which emerged when respondents were asked for their top three reasons for choosing a teaching career included: 1) pragmatic reasons ("fits well with family life"); 2) nurturing reasons ("love children"); 3) to make a difference ("like to see a child grow and learn"); 4) personal growth ("it is challenging"); 5) personal experiences and relationships ("a former teacher influenced me"); and 6) status ("an honor-

Figure 1. Reasons for Choosing Your Career



able profession"). Preservice teachers' most frequent response categories were: "to make a difference" (28% of their responses), "nurturing reasons" (25%), and "status" (20%). Inservice teachers named the same top two reasons, though in reverse order: "nurturing reasons" (29%) and "to make a difference" (21%). Inservice teachers differed dramatically from preservice teachers in that they seldom mentioned "status" (4%) as a reason for choosing a teaching career. In fact, their third most frequent response was "pragmatic reasons" (13%). Figure 1 summarizes the responses of both groups.

Figure 2. Reasons for Choosing Your Career



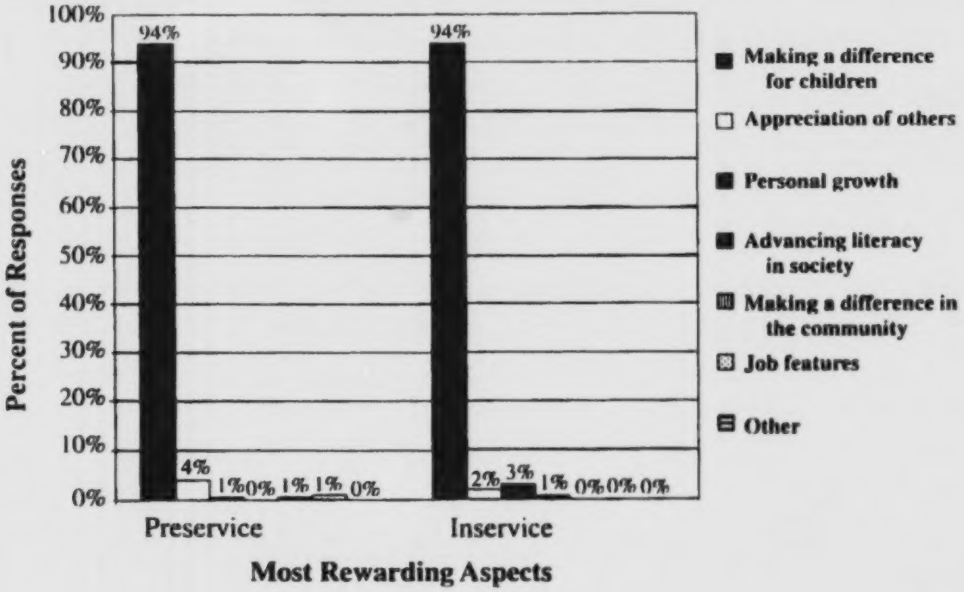
Interestingly, other careers considered by the preservice and inservice teachers yielded very different responses (see Figure 2). Most preservice teachers had considered other careers before they decided on teaching. Most popular were business (22%), other education-related jobs, such as a child life specialist (13%), medical (12%), other helping professions (12%), and "other" (24%). Only 12% said they had only considered the career of teaching. Most inservice teachers (64%), however, had only considered the career of teaching.

What are the Rewards and Frustrations of Teaching?

When asked to name the most rewarding aspect of teaching that they expected to experience or had experienced, preservice teachers and inservice teachers both, overwhelming, responded with answers that clustered around

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 3. The Most Rewarding Aspect of Teaching

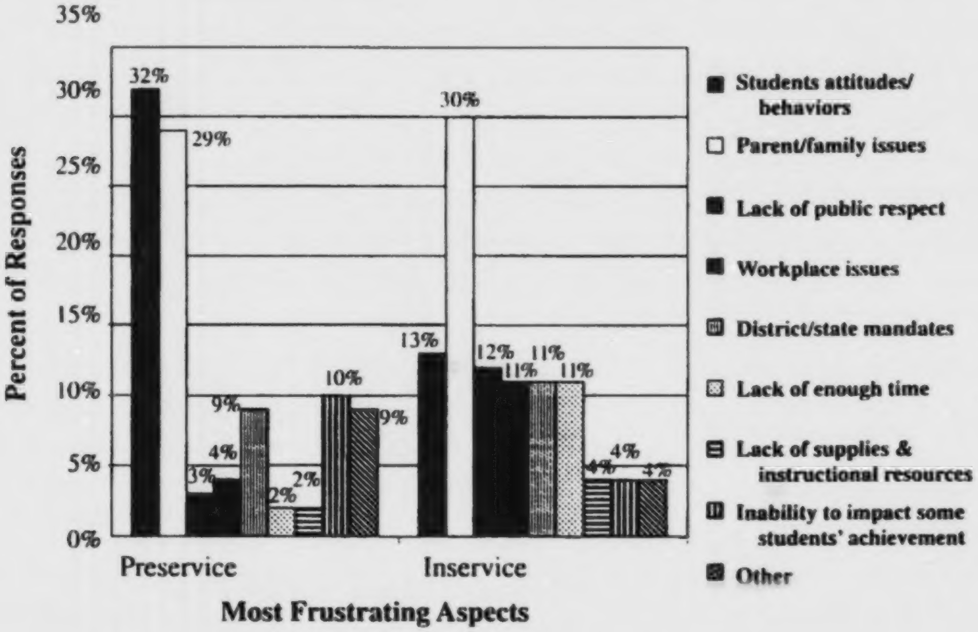


the category of "making a difference for children" (94% of each group). A typical answer, which fits this category, was, "Helping children learn, grow, and succeed through the year." The other categories identified were: appreciation of others, personal growth, advancing literacy in society, and making a difference in the community and job features–but they were seldom named by either group (see Figure 3).

There was greater diversity of answers and definite differences between preservice and inservice teachers when asked to name the most frustrating aspect of teaching (see Figure 4). Preservice teachers' most frequent category of response was "student attitudes/behaviors" (32%). Inservice teachers named that category as their second most frequent response, but it was a distant second for them (13%). Typical answers that fit this category were, "students who don't care and you can't reach" and "discipline and classroom management." Inservice teachers' top frustration (30%) was "parent/family issues." Preservice teachers also mentioned that category frequently (29%). It appears that the concern that a number of preservice teachers express about their ability to manage classroom behavior may be less of an issue after they have been teaching for a while. However, "parent/family issues" (sample responses, "dealing with difficult parents," or "students with difficult home lives") continues to be a frustrating issue.

Other categories which received fewer responses from both preservice and inservice teachers were: lack of public respect, workplace issues, district/state mandates, lack of enough time, lack of supplies or instructional resources, and inability to impact some students' achievement. Inservice teachers, who have had more opportunity to experience the frustrations of teaching, do, in fact, mention most of these categories more frequently than the preservice teachers did. Consistent with the differing perceptions of the status of the profession expressed by preservice and inservice teachers when responding to the "reason for career choice" question, preservice teachers did not often mention (3%) "lack of public respect" as a frustration, but inservice teachers (12%), did note it more frequently.

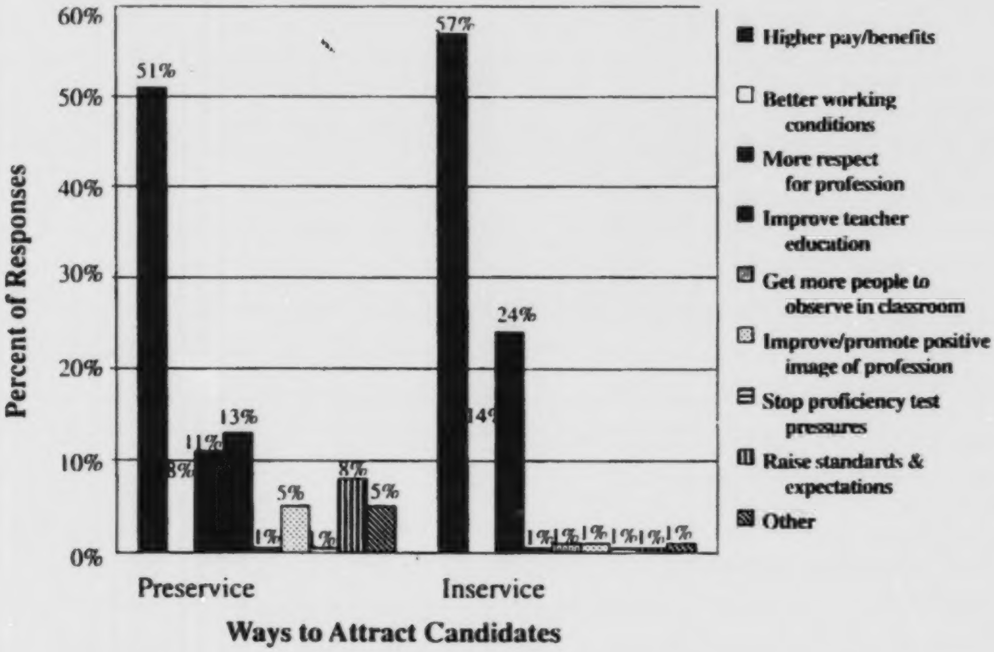
Figure 4. The Most Frustrating Aspects of Teaching



How Can We Attract High Quality Candidates to Teaching?

Preservice (51%) and inservice teachers (57%) both, overwhelmingly, saw "higher pay/benefits" as key to attracting people to the profession (see Figure 5). Inservice teachers' next most frequent response (24%) was "more respect for the profession." This idea is consistent with the "lack of public respect" concern they expressed when asked about frustrations. Preservice teachers' second most frequent suggestion was "improve teacher education" (13%). Interestingly, inservice teachers did not appear as unhappy with their teacher education as only 1% suggested improving it. Other categories (with sample responses) that received limited support included: better working conditions ("smaller classes"), get more people to observe in classrooms ("allow education opportunities to be integrated into all possible majors"), improve/promote a positive image of the profession ("promote fulfillment that

Figure 5. Ways to Attract More High Quality Candidates



comes from this career"), stop proficiency test pressures ("no Praxis"), and raise standards/expectations ("make program a 5 year Master's Degree program"). Although one respondent suggested, "Nothing–you do it for higher level benefits, not high payment or recognition," most had concrete suggestions for making the teaching profession more appealing to qualified candidates.

Discussion and Implications

Earlier studies of teacher career choice typically surveyed or interviewed a "generic" teaching population at the elementary and secondary level. We chose to focus on literacy teachers because of the unusual challenges they have faced in recent years. The call for accountability has resulted in relentless testing designed to guarantee that every child will read. In addition, "The Reading Wars" often complicate the pedagogical choices teachers make as they try to integrate their beliefs about teaching with district and state mandates. Consequently, the insights of literacy teachers reflect the experiences of those in the vanguard of contemporary teaching.

Our first study (Hoffman & Newton, 2000) focused on inservice teachers at a state literacy conference. Since these were educators who had elected to attend a professional conference, we expected a serious commitment to teaching. Similarly, this study focuses on those preparing for a career, or those who have voluntarily sought advanced study in literacy education. Because they are actively engaged as students themselves, they also bring a unique perspective about the career choice they have made.

Perhaps not surprisingly, some findings of this study mirror findings from earlier studies. Consistent with a large body of research and with our earlier survey, these preservice and inservice teachers chose teaching because they "love children" or want to nurture. They also wanted to make a difference, a motivator similar to Public Agenda's "calling" (Wadsworth, 2000 & 2001). The overwhelming response of "making a difference" as the most rewarding career aspect of our preservice and inservice teachers is consistent with the importance of intrinsic rewards cited by many (Lortie, 1975; Latham, 1998; Cockburn, 2000; Burke, 2000).

Yet we found some interesting differences between inservice and preservice teachers that other research had not noted and these differences could have implications for improving recruitment and retention. One interesting area to explore is the status of the teaching profession. Preservice teachers mentioned "status" as a reason for choosing their career far more often than did the inservice teachers. Preservice teachers said, "It is an honorable profession" or a "respectable profession." On the other hand, inservice teachers frequently mentioned status ("more respect for the profession") as a way to attract highly qualified candidates to teaching. Similarly, responses such as needing a more, "Positive perception of educators," and "Respect vs. pointing the finger," relate to status. So, for some, it seems that candidates may enter teaching expecting a degree of status that they do not find, but believe it is an area that should receive attention. The comments of inservice teachers may in part be attributable to the pressure for accountability and the public criticism of teachers that often occurs when test scores do not meet the expectations of parents, legislators, and district administrators. While status may not be a deterrent to career choice, survey results suggest that it may impact the profession's ability to retain quality instructors.

Of course the need to raise the status of the profession is not a new idea and it is a highly complex problem. It is also linked to salary and other financial rewards that both preservice and inservice teachers named as the most important motivator to attract new candidates to teaching. Curiously, while both preservice and inservice teachers cited "better pay" as the major impetus for recruitment of new teachers, they themselves indicate that love of children or desire to serve were their own primary motivators. In fact, Public Agenda's (2000) research indicates that most teachers would forego salary increases for better working conditions.

In fact, Burke (2000) suggests that the strong desire to make a difference and to work with children have been "underutilized in teacher recruitment" (p. 4). Efforts to recruit teacher candidates should consider how to foreground these rewards through participatory experiences with children. Perhaps recruitment efforts should seek ways to provide the experience of service to those who might not have considered teaching. To this end, the service learning movement, increasingly popular in high schools and on university campuses, is a rich source of potential teachers (Toole & Toole, 1992). Service learning experiences for teacher recruitment would, of course, have to involve interactions with children and opportunities to reflect on the personal satisfaction inherent in such work.

Another interesting difference between our preservice and inservice teachers was their concern about student behavior. For preservice teachers this is a major frustration, typified by one response, "I am scared as to how I will have the classroom under my control." Inservice teachers were much less frustrated by student behavior. Perhaps this is a professional development issue that both teacher candidates and teacher educators should acknowledge.

However, both preservice and inservice teachers share the important frustration over parent and family issues. Responses such as, "Lack of parent involvement in children's education," from a preservice teacher, or "Dealing with parents who do not feel that they are accountable in their child's life," from an inservice teacher, fit this category. In recent years, most teacher education programs have understood and recognized the critical role parents play in their children's cognitive development and success in school. Although it is hard to impact some of the related societal issues, literacy can be a vehicle for connecting schools, teachers, parents, and children. Since communication and critical thinking are the goal of literacy, perhaps teacher educators might consider new ways for teachers to involve parents through language arts activities.

Finally, we found that preservice and inservice teachers seem to be approaching a career decision differently. Many inservice teachers focus exclusively on a career in teaching, saying they would not consider something different if they were just starting out now. Yet most of our preservice teachers considered other careers before making their choice. We probably can no longer depend on a population of young people who grew up always wanting to be a teacher, nor can we assume that new teachers will stay with their career for a lifetime. The implications for recruitment of new teachers will require creative ideas at the pre-college, college level, post-baccalaureate level, and beyond. Adult volunteer activities, such as America Reads tutoring, may even be an example of a way to recruit people into careers of teaching literacy. We also need to understand the needs of candidates who opt in and out of teaching careers at various points in their lives as some are suggesting (Peske et al., 2001).

It is important to note the nature of qualitative research presents inherent limitations that must be considered when generalizing about the results of this study. First, the sample is limited to two specific institutions whose classes consist of unique individuals. At different institutions and with different participants, results may have unfolded somewhat differently. Moreover, surveys on the same topic but conducted with different instruments may also have produced somewhat different results. The study is also limited by the finite set of data collected. Nevertheless, we believe data analysis provided useful insights that might guide further research on this topic.

Though some of our findings support those of others and some of our findings suggest needed changes that reflect the differences between preservice and inservice teachers' perceptions, we also think this survey raises some new questions. It would be helpful to explore further differences between urban and suburban teachers and college students. Do traditional undergraduates and post-baccalaureate teacher licensure candidates view career decisions, frustrations, and rewards similarly? Are different motivators needed to attract minorities to teaching? Survey data can be most useful in our efforts to better know the people we teach and to implement changes to improve the teaching profession. Moreover, answers to these questions should result in recruitment and retention of high quality, dedicated literacy teachers for the twenty-first century.

References

Burke, E. M. (2000). Motivations to teach: Post-baccalaureate students. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 67*(1), 21-24.

Cockburn, A. D. (2000). Elementary teachers' needs: Issues of retention and recruitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*(2), 223-238.

Connolly, R. A. (2000). Why do good teachers leave the profession? What can be done to retain them? *Momentum, 31*(3), 55-57.

Dieterich, C. A., & Panton, C. L. (1996). Motivations of post-baccalaureate students seeking teacher certification: A context for appropriate advising strategies. *Journal of Career Development, 22*(4), 249-257.

Farkas, S., et.al. *A sense of calling: Who teaches and why*. (Public Agenda, 2000) New York.

Hoffman, A. R., & Newton, E. V. (2000). Looking at our profession: Past, present, and future. *Ohio Reading Teacher, 34*(1), 65-67.

Latham, A. S. (1998). Teacher satisfaction. *Educational Leadership, 55*, 82-83.

Lortie, D.C. (1975). *Schoolteachers: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lucksinger, L. N. (2000). Teachers: Can we get them and keep them? *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, volume 67, issue 1, 11-15.

Meek, A. (1998). America's teachers: Much to celebrate. *Educational Leadership, 55*(5), 12-17.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Olson, L. (2000). Finding and keeping competent teachers. *Education Week on TheWeb.* Retrieved March 25, 2002, from HtmlResAnchor http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc00/ templates/article.cfm?slug=intro.htm.

Perie, M., & Baker, D. P. (1997). Job satisfaction among America's teachers: Effects of workplace conditions, background characteristics, and teacher compensation. Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research (EDD00004). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED412181)

Peske, H. G., Liu, E., Johnson, S. M., Kauffman, D., & Kaardos, S. M. (2001). The next generation of teachers: Changing conceptions of a career in teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(4), 304-311.

Serow, R. C. (1993). Why teach? Altruism and career choice among nontraditional recruits to teaching. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 26*(4), 197-204.

State Policy Updates (2000). Who should teach? *Education Week on the Web.* Retrieved March 25, 2002, from HtmlResAnchor http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc00/templates/map.htm.

Struass, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Techniques for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Toole, P., & Toole, J. (1992). *Communities as Places of Learning.* National Youth Leadership Council.

Wadsworth, D. (2000). A sense of calling. *The American School Board Journal, 187*(10), 33-34.

Wadsworth, D. (2001). Why new teachers choose to teach. *Educational Leadership, 58*(8), 24-28.

Appendix A. Career Choice Survey: Preservice Educators

1. Circle your current status:
   Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Post-Baccalaureate

2. Circle your projected licensure area and write in your teaching area(s), if applicable.
   ECE MCE ________________ AYA/MA ________________

3. What were the top 3 reasons you selected teaching for your career?
   #1 ____
   #2 ____
   #3 ____

4. What do you think will be *the one most rewarding* aspect of this career?
   ____
   ____

5. What do you think will be *the one most frustrating or unpleasant* aspect of this career?
   ____
   ____

6. What other careers did you consider?
   ____
   ____

7. What is *the main thing* that could be done to attract more high quality candidates to education?

Appendix B. Career Choice Survey: Inservice Educators

---

1. My current career is:
   ____ Classroom Teacher
   ____ Specialist/ Tutor
   ____ Other ________________
2. For how many years have you been an educator?

3. What were the top 3 reasons you selected this field for you career?
   #1 ________________________________
   #2 ________________________________
   #3 ________________________________

4. What do you find *the one most rewarding* aspect of this career?

   ____

5. What do you find *the one most frustrating or unpleasant* aspect of this career?

   ____
   ____

6. If you were just starting out on your career path now, what career would you choose?

   ____
   ____

7. What is *the main thing* that could be done to attract more high quality candidates to education?

   ____
   ____

LEARNING TO USE A SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT TO ADVANCE REFLECTION-BASED LITERACY PRACTICE

Linda S. Wold

Purdue University Calumet

Abstract

This study provides initial validation of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action as a tool to help preservice and inservice teachers evaluate the quality of their instruction. The goal was to determine the value of the instrument in reflective practice and its impact on participants' actions. Three preservice and three inservice teachers, involved in a professional development partnership, volunteered to evaluate their literacy instruction using the self-assessment instrument and to report their findings in interviews conducted during the field experience in a reading methods course. Qualitative research methods were used to analyze data collected across nine weeks. Preliminary findings from all subjects indicate that the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching provides the language needed to move participants toward exemplary literacy teaching and improved practice. Overall participants reported that the instrument was useful as a guide for thinking critically about action-based reflective practice.

Few self-assessment tools exist to support either preservice or inservice teachers' professional development. Nor is there any validation that those assessment tools that are available in fact do promote continued teacher learning or help educators to orchestrate a "pedagogically meaningful relationship" (Shulman, 1988, p. 37) with subject matter content and the dynamic contexts of teaching. This article contributes to the field of teacher development and learning by providing initial validation of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action (Wold, 2000, 2001, 2002) to help participants evaluate the quality of their instruction. The underlying goals of this study are twofold: to articulate the value of action-based, reflective practice and to emphasize the importance of self-assessment as a basis of reform initiatives. Toward those ends, this work is grounded in research on literacy teaching reforms using self-assessment protocols, explains the research study methodology and preliminary analyses of the data, and closes with a discussion of the implications of using a self-assessment tool for improving the quality of preservice and inservice teaching.

Literacy Teaching Using Self-Assessment Protocols

Sykes (1996) argues that teacher learning which results in better student learning is the heart of reform, yet improved teaching and learning on a wide scale has yet to emerge. Several studies have analyzed teaching concepts and programs to support professional development. Zeichner and Liston (1985) created a reflective teaching index to document levels of discourse related to program goals. They found that student teachers' conceptual levels seemed to be related to their degree of reflective discourse documented in conferences with supervisors. Zeichner and Liston (1987) also designed a preservice teacher program that promoted professional development oriented toward reflective teaching, teacher autonomy, and participation in educational governance. Both studies involved researchers evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

More recent studies of pedagogy have documented how trained coaches in mathematics and literacy teaching moved teachers toward strategic reasoning and action based on their conversations about videotaped teaching behaviors (Heaton & Lampert, 1993; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). These studies also rely on a "more expert other" to prompt advanced reasoning and actions by classroom teachers.

Self-assessment protocols for improving teaching of preservice and inservice teachers are rare. Roskos, Boehlen, and Walker (2000) evaluated self-assessment of instructional talk as a form of responsive teaching and self-assistance. Nine classroom teachers enrolled in a reading practicum for a master's degree program were taught to transcribe and analyze videotaped tutorial sessions and to write responsive reactions to their teaching. After final analysis of a sampling of tutoring sessions with one or two children across a 5- to 6-week period, the authors reported participants' increased awareness of instructional talk levels, but the self-assessment tool did not seem to promote teachers' levels of responsive discourse. Although the use of the self-assessment tool to inform teachers of the kinds of discourse used during reading instruction did not show increased discrimination in their talk, the teachers did demonstrate a more critical stance in using evaluative terms and cognitive strategies to explain conceptual understandings.

A professional development project in Ohio, CORE (Roskos, 2001), involved training of 1,000 literacy specialists. Freppon and Campbell (2001) conducted a school-based clinical pilot study using the Teacher Learning Instrument (TLI) developed specifically for the CORE project. The TLI includes protocols and scaffolding parameters designed to help classroom teachers focus on using critical teaching features, such as joint problem solving with children; organizing activities within Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development where talk is used to challenge thinking and to help children internalize ideas; and self-regulating actions in which teachers help children take control of and manage their own learning.

In the pilot study, Freppon and Campbell (2001) found preliminary evidence for the usefulness of the TLI in cases where the literacy specialist as researcher and teacher participated in four literacy lessons. The explicit framework, along with conversations between the teacher and literacy specialist about improved teaching across the lessons, helped the classroom teacher incorporate all levels of scaffolding in her teaching. Overall the TLI requires talk with more significant others and scaffolded opportunities to use the instrument effectively.

Plans for revamping the quality of teaching in Nevada (Sawyer, 2001) and North Carolina (Howard & McCloskey, 2001) began with revised evaluation systems for helping new and experienced teachers to align their teaching with state standards. In Nevada, teachers set annual goals in two areas for improving aspects of teaching; in North Carolina, teachers were evaluated on a performance rubric, also useful as a self-assessment tool. Both revamped systems require active involvement by experienced teachers and feedback from evaluators.

Like Roskos, Boehlen, and Walker's (2000) study, the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action examines inservice teachers' literacy instruction, and additionally looks at preservice teachers' literacy teaching, "where responsibility for performance shifts from the direct guidance of a more knowledgeable other to the self, thus stimulating self-regulating processes" (p. 234). The intention of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching is to provide participants with a framework by which they may independently gauge and improve their literacy implementation effectiveness.

Development of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching

This Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action evolved from a two-year data collection in eight primary literacy classrooms. The project was a collaborative effort of researchers from The University of Chicago Center for School Improvement, The Ohio State University, and a network of Chicago Public Schools, who were working together to learn more about teacher development. The self-assessment instrument was designed to shift responsibility for improving the quality of literacy implementation to preservice and inservice teachers, particularly in schools without literacy coaches.

Description of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching Instrument

The Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching (Appendix A) was developed by examining those critical functions and key indicators that are important in quality literacy teaching. The researcher categorized consistent literacy teaching successes and challenges by using the guided reading and interactive writing scale functions (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001) to determine teaching quality. By clustering the data into categories of successes and challenges, two areas became clear. First, quality teaching combines functions: the teaching of procedures congruent with the teaching for students' processing. The integration of teaching procedures and processing is central to improving literacy teaching. Second, it was clear that engagement, resourcefulness, item/process knowledge, decision making, purpose, and pacing were critical indicators of quality literacy teaching.

To address the premise that teaching well requires deep-level understandings of ways to integrate procedures and knowledge strategically, the self-assessment functions and indicators were developed to help preservice and inservice teachers gauge improvement in their literacy teaching (Wold, 2000, 2001). The critical functions, created from clustering patterns across participants' reflections and actions, became the headers of each column of the instrument. The headers are presented in rank order (1 to 5) based on increasing complexity of integration and processing of procedures and knowledge. For example, a rating of a level 1 function indicates that the teacher is focused on teaching procedures, while a rating of a level 5 function reveals teaching of integrated procedures and processing strategies that show exemplary instruction and maximum opportunities for student learning.

The key indicators ***underlined*** and listed in the left-hand column define areas of teacher effectiveness of instruction: engagement, resourcefulness, balance of teaching item and process knowledge (Clay, 1991), strategic decision-making, clearly stated lesson purpose and connection throughout the lesson, and appropriate pacing of lessons. The indicators provide a guide for participants to determine an average overall rating. Statements for each indicator, the cross section between the header and the indicator, were written to capture the essence of quality literacy teaching at different developmental levels. These statements were used with preservice teachers in the pilot study to determine fit.

A comprehensive rating was also created to help participants gauge an "average" rating. For example, a participant rating of level 3 in most areas and level 4 in two areas, received a comprehensive rating of 3. Though more emphasis was placed on indicator ratings and plans to improve targeted areas, participants specifically discussed how they wanted to improve their overall ratings and used the comprehensive rating to challenge themselves.

The functions (headers) and key indicators (left-hand column) create the framework of this developmentally organized self-assessment of literacy teaching. Because of the developmental nature of the instrument, teachers are able to evaluate their own teaching on a continuum from least-developed skills (1) to highest levels of understanding (5). The intersections of functions and indicators are articulated in the descriptors of progressive levels of awareness and understanding that exemplify teaching at each stage along the continuum. They plot out one way to think about essential teaching practices that promote the integration of mechanics (what to do when) or procedures and the movement toward deep level learning.

Some additional changes in the design of the self-assessment instrument occurred during a 2001 pilot study with preservice teachers because they systematically rated themselves at the higher end of the continuum. Initial analysis of responses of participants during the two-year data collection indicated that even though respondents may have positive and rewarding experiences in literacy teaching, it generally takes at least three years of full-time teaching to integrate procedures and processes described at a Level 3 (Wold, 2000). Therefore, a functional vertical line was added to the instrument to remind preservice teachers of this.

When using the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching, both preservice and inservice teachers take an active role in self-reflection and action. Danielson (2001) notes that active teachers' participation in the evaluation process is key rather than simply participating in evaluation that is done to them. Participants write one or two action plans after instruction is rated to target future teaching for further analysis and to challenge themselves to continually improve their teaching. Fullan (1991) suggests that this type of continual improvement is a way to advance "fundamental instructional reform" (p. 46).

Overview of Research

This study examined data collected from participants who evaluated their instruction using the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching and wrote action plans based on their strengths and challenges in literacy teaching. The data were collected over one semester during the nine-week period when the author taught an undergraduate field-based reading tutoring course and conducted on-site staff development for improving the teaching of comprehension strategies to host teachers. These questions guided the data collection and analyses:

1. Does the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action improve the quality of teaching and learning?
2. What is the impact of using the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching on preservice and inservice teachers' reflection-based practice and teaching and learning?

Method

Qualitative methods were used to explore ways that the participants' used the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching to improve the quality of their teaching. Deep-level, guided interviews with each subject (Appendix B), were conducted, using protocols developed from Marshall and Rossman's (1995) in-depth interviewing principles. These interviews helped to uncover the preservice and inservice teachers' subjective views on the usefulness of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching. The interactive analysis method (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to analyze the data and draw conclusions by determining salient categories of meaning that showed the complexities of teaching and learning. Patterns were categorized, reviewed, and organized in matrices to track verbatim responses for referencing original data sources.

The Setting

The school site, located outside of a large metropolitan area in the Midwest, was selected for this study because of the school-wide commitment to improving the quality of literacy teaching through a school-university collaboration. The school's demographic breakdown by race at the time of the study was 80% Caucasian, 16% Hispanic, and 4% African American and Asian. Over 40% of the students received free or reduced breakfast and lunch.

Participants

During the fall semester 2001, the researcher invited all preservice students and host teachers involved in the K-5 university/field professional development partnership (PDS) at the selected school site to participate in the study. The PDS involved teacher candidates in the corrective reading course who tutored a student and worked with the classroom teacher for five hours per week across eight weeks of the semester. Host teachers were part of the PDS and offered to mentor a preservice teacher during the eight-week field experience. They were active participants in mentoring teacher candidates, and attended a bi-monthly after school literacy training focused on improving comprehension strategy instruction.

The selection of the preservice and inservice teacher sample required that participants express a willingness to assess their literacy teaching by using the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action. Three Caucasian preservice teachers (3/19) and three Caucasian classroom teachers (3/14) agreed to be involved in the eight-week period of data collection and to be interviewed three times by the researcher.

Prior to the data collection, the researcher considered all participants in the study to be inquisitive about teaching and learning and reflective in practice. (Pseudonyms of participants provide confidentiality.) For example, in the first interviews, Pamela, a sixth year teacher said, "I think I was reflective already. I think this will give me the tools to see growth, and I like having that rubric." Preservice teachers also assumed reflective stances. In the first interview Amanda reported, "I have learned that as an educator we are continually growing and learning. I need to be reflective and continue evaluating my teaching methods and strive to better myself as an educator." Using Boyd, Boll, Brawner, and Villaume's (1998) guidelines for becoming reflective professionals, the researcher noted that the participants used professional inquiry, questioning strategies, and decision making based on a personal philosophy about how children learn to think critically about developing literacy competency. All participants were willing to explore teaching and to be curious about improving instruction, even though it is "not something that occurs easily for most of us and it takes time to develop" (Eby, 1997, p. 10).

Preservice teachers were in their last semester of methods courses before student teaching and had completed a minimum of three reading- or language arts-related courses in the university's teacher education program. Amanda and Marie switched to teaching from other professions and were interested in teaching grades 2-5; Karly was a young parent working toward an early childhood degree for kindergarten placement. The host teacher participants in grades 2-5 varied in years of teaching experience but all were involved in professional collaborations to improve teaching practice within the school. Francine, a teacher-leader in the school, had taught kindergarten through fifth grade in 20 years of teaching. Pamela had six years experience teaching primary classes and had been a volunteer parent in her own children's classrooms. Debra, a new teacher on staff, had taught special education classes in high school for four years, was a case manager for three schools, and left her administrative position to teach fifth grade.

Data Collection

The range of "documentary evidence" (Erickson, 1986, p. 121) or complete data sources employed in this research included three 30- to 60-minute interviews with each participant; preservice teachers' lesson plans, reflection papers, and artifacts of student work; and classroom teachers' written responses to an after-school study group that facilitated improved teaching, with particular emphasis on the teaching of reading comprehension strategies. Data were sorted by patterns to identify distinctive categories of meanings and were verified in multiple contexts by both preservice and inservice teachers. An audit trail back to verbatim transcriptions of participants' interview responses and across the full data collection assured good decision making.

Protocol

The research protocol involved the introduction of the Self-Assessment Instrument, the interview of each participant's ratings, and documentation of ratings and changes with preliminary analyses. During introductions, the researcher presented the self-assessment instrument to all participants, explained the rating system to help subjects understand how to gauge their literacy implementation, and responded to questions. Participants rated themselves independently to show initial developmental levels during the first week of the field experiences. After self-ratings were completed independently, the researcher asked the interview protocol questions (Appendix B) to each participant (the first, fourth, and last weeks of the field experience. The interview process included: (a) the researcher documenting each question in written field notes, and rereading responses when necessary to clarify the interviewee's thinking; (b) participants providing examples for rating changes and evidence, followed by written action plans to target improved literacy teaching in one or two areas; and (c) the researcher documenting self-assessment ratings and changes based on the interview. One protocol change included the elimination of audiotape recordings because responses were often inaudible. In follow-up interviews, action plans were reviewed or revised to target participants' personal development and learning. For example, participants were asked to use the action plan to improve literacy teaching: What did you learn from reviewing your action plans or from participating in this study that may help you become a better literacy educator? (Appendix B, f).

Analysis

Data analysis and interpretation followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive analysis method, a three-part, concurrent analytical model for qualitative research. The ongoing decision-making processes for developing propositions about the research data included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In analyses of the data, the researcher used triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Mathison, 1988), that is, verification by multiple sources, to capture participants' perceptions. Triangulation, the "act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point . . . strengthens the study's usefulness for other settings" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 144). For example, triangulation in this research involved multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews and written artifacts, multiple member checks with preservice and inservice teachers, different grade-level reading contexts in K-5 classrooms, and additional validation through documentary evidence from the participants.

Presentation of Data

Three areas of the data collection help the reader to understand conclusion-drawing and verification. First, participant ratings are presented as comprehensive ratings and individual rating changes based on documentary interviews (Table 1). Second, an action plan chart reveals targeted goals by the participants (Table 2). And third, responses to interview questions indicate how participants acted on reflection-based teaching. The data presentation provides important details for verifying findings.

Table 1. Self –Assessment Ratings of Literacy Teaching

Developing (1) to Advanced (5)				
Preservice teaching		Inservice Teaching		
1	2	3	4	5
	Amanda (Pt1) Resourcefulness (2, 1, 2)	Pamela (T1) Engagement (4, 3, 3) Resourcefulness (3, 4, 4) Decision-making (3, 4, 4)	Francine (T3) (remained stable)	
	Karly (Pt2) Engagement (2, 2, 3) Resourcefulness (1, 1, 2)	Debra (T2) Pacing (1, 3)		
	Marie (Pt3) Engagement (3, 2, 3) Decision-making (2, 2, 3) Purpose (3, 2, 2) Pacing (2, 3, 3)			

Note. Change in self-assessment ratings listed in parentheses.
Coding: T = classroom teacher; Pt = preservice teacher.

Teachers' comprehensive ratings were stable and self-assessment ratings changed incrementally over time (Table 1). For example, comprehensive ratings show that Amanda, Karly, and Marie, the preservice teachers, rated themselves at the developmental level 2. Pamela and Debra, classroom teachers, gauged their literacy teaching at the developmental level 3, while Francine considered herself a level 4. Debra, unable to participate in the second interview, rated her action plans only at the beginning and end of the study.

In reviewing the rating changes, presented in parentheses under participants' names, it is clear that ratings changed positively, remained stable, or regressed at times. Participants were starkly honest about discussing evidence for these changes that were linked to documented examples in lesson plans or study group notes about teaching and learning.

Table 2. Preservice and Inservice Teachers' Action Plans

Participant	Indicators	Action plan/s
	Engagement	
Amanda (Pt1)	Resourcefulness	Observe teaching methods, attend educational seminars, read journals, confer with professors. Improve teaching through coaching and staying current with educational research.
Pamela (T1)	Item/Process knowledge	Balance appropriate item and process knowledge based on students' responses and needs.
Karly (Pt2)		Work on implementing process knowledge/teaching.
Marie (Pt3)		Teach more strategically for student processing.
Marie (Pt3)	Decision-making	Improve decision-making to be more supportive of learning goals.
Debra (T2)		Match curriculum with assessment—to have assessment decide on how to proceed with teaching strategies.
Karly (Pt2)	Purpose	State purposes that are congruent with learning.
Francine (T3)		Work on conveying the lessons purpose to my students—checking for students' clarity throughout the lesson and at the conclusion.
Debra (T2)	Pacing	Pacing is the goal—increase time on task and decrease transition time.

Coding: T = classroom teacher; Pt = preservice teacher.

Self-selected action plans indicated varied goals (Table 2) and remained fairly stable across the data collection with the exception of two classroom teachers. Karly added a focus on making decisions that were congruent with learning, while Pamela expanded her action plan from "a focus on student needs and responses using questions" to "balancing appropriate item and process knowledge based on students responses and needs."

Finally responses to interview questions revealed participants' striving toward their action plan goals. Table 3 captures the abbreviated interview responses from Appendix B.

Table 3. Participant Interview Responses

Interview Question	Target Literacy Teaching and Thinking		Promote Reflection
d. Did the process of assessing teaching challenge you in any worthwhile or strategic way?	Pamela (T1)—strive to reach goals with written guide; used weaknesses to pinpoint areas of improvement. Amanda (Pt1)—strive for improvement and affirmed the importance of items (indicators) Karly (Pt2)—challenged to teach item/process knowledge	Debra (T2)—competition in the continuum is good but can provoke dishonest responses	Marie (Pt3)—reflect to target needs; reflect in-depth about practice and provide evidence; reflect and connect to methods teaching; Francine (T3)—reflect and evaluate teaching self Pamela (T1)—reflect and think through all of the indicators
	No	Some	Challenge
e. Was the process of assessing your literacy teaching problematic in any way?	Pamela (T1) Francine (T3) Debra (T2), time consuming Karly (Pt2) , wording sometimes confusing	Marie (Pt3), the language-wasn't sure I understood the question but nothing wrong having to think about it.	Amanda (Pt1), difficult to assess oneself
	Guide Practice and Improve Literacy teaching		Grow and Learn
f. What did you learn from reviewing your action plans or from participating in this study that may help you become a better literacy educator?	Francine (T3)—cognizant of what my expectations are and let students know what they are Karly (Pt2)—teach more than item knowledge and get students to do the thinking (processing); Marie (Pt3)—reflect on and target own weaknesses, in particular, two things that are most critical.	Amanda (Pt1)—strive to better myself Karly (Pt2)—reinforce and state purposes that are congruent with learning.	Pamela (T1)—tool to see growth; rubric helpful. Debra (T2)—language to describe myself; connect to teachers' learning. Amanda (Pt1)—continually growing/learning/reflecting and evaluating teaching. Karly (Pt2)—my direction in teaching and for children to become active knowledge constructors.

Coding: T = classroom teacher; Pt = preservice teacher.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The data were analyzed to discover patterns and trends in participants' reflections and actions that documented (a) improved literacy teaching, and (b) the impact of using the self-assessment instrument on reflection-based practice. Because preservice and inservice teachers used the self-assessment tool, it was also important to compare development between them.

Preliminary analyses of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action show that the instrument improved literacy teaching in two important ways. First, both preservice and inservice teachers reported that they used the critical language of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching to move toward accomplished literacy instruction (Table 3, d). The use of language to promote improved practice in the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching was documented repeatedly by all participants in various teaching contexts, reflections, and summary notes of study group sessions. Marie and Karly though found the language used in the self-assessment instrument to be difficult to understand conceptually (Table 3, e). And Amanda, also a preservice teacher, found self-assessment to be a challenge, she considered it a worthwhile challenge that helped her to realize the importance of continually growing and reflecting on one's practice (Table 3, e, f).

Second, participants showed small changes in improved literacy teaching when they focused on becoming better literacy educators by targeting areas for improvement, and thinking reflectively about practice (Table 3, f). Their experiences indicated that the instrument's focus on critical areas for improvement of literacy teaching guided their related actions. For example, categories for targeted improvement by participants included addressing challenges in teaching, reflecting on teaching and revising plans, and building understandings about self and students in the cycle of teaching and learning. These categories emerged from the interview data concerning what teachers learned from participating in this study through an active learning stance. That is, participants were actively focused and directed toward becoming better literacy educators.

Although more data needs to be collected to show measurable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, participants clearly demonstrated actions that moved them toward improved literacy goals. For example, Marie, a preservice teacher, stated that "coming up with two goals for my action plan made me think about what I really need to work on. I looked to see what my weaknesses were and my main goals to target—two things to work on that were most critical." Active participation in goal setting, such as the written action plans, helped participants' focus their efforts toward making progress (Sawyer, 2001). Participants also reported that they believed that they had made progress in their targeted areas (Table 3), even when their self-assessment ratings showed incremental change, or as in Francine's case, no change at all (see Table 1). All participants set strategic goals, but they also felt that the two-month time line was insufficient to achieve them.

Preliminary findings on the impact of using the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching to evaluate participants' reflection-based practice are tentative because of the small data sample. Even so, participants used the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching as an "in-the-head" guide to think about practice and to improve teaching. For example, Pam, an experienced teacher of six years stated "[The instrument] gives you goals. You write it down so you can see it. And then you do it mentally and put it into categories—think through all that—and that's a challenge." For Pam, this mental processing was a meaningful challenge that prompted her to think critically about her teaching and learning. What is not clear is the extent to which her thinking and learning improved her teaching practice. Other participants reported that they never referred back to the instrument between interviews but claimed they knew their goals and worked toward them.

Finally, there is a distinction between the preservice and inservice teachers' perceptions of their literacy teaching in the comprehensive ratings (Table 1). Preservice teachers consistently rated themselves an overall level 2 and inservice teachers were either a level 3 or 4. These ratings show that participants understand the need for improved literacy teaching at all developmental levels. Preservice teachers also began to realize the complexity of accomplished teaching, and to admit that teaching well is hard work. Marie captures this in her last interview:

> I feel like I'm making progress but I'm not always sure if I'm progressing. . . . I feel like I go back and forth making some headway, but then I don't know if I am. When I plan something [for student processing] it doesn't always go that way. I've used my action plans to guide my thinking, and I've gotten better at student processing. One step forward and one stop back. It's a deceptive kind of thing . . . and students are not always receptive.

Though Francine, an experienced teacher, showed no movement in her ratings, she also came to a profound understanding, "to take cues from the students, to give them what they need more than give them what I need."

Implications

The purpose of this study was to discover how self-assessment impacts one's own teaching and reflection-based practice. Findings support the use of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action as a guide for coaching and thinking about essential processes that are critical to accomplished teaching. These points will be examined in light of participants' active involvement in improved literacy teaching.

First, evaluation is an essential aspect of improved teaching. Clearly it is not feasible to coach all teachers or to provide fool-proof systematic support for developing strategic and exemplary practice. Teachers must ultimately accept responsibility for making the educational system a self-improving one. However, preservice teachers who develop a mindset for systematic, critical analysis of reflection-based practice may enhance future teaching cultures that promote increased scholarship and learning. For those who do not choose to improve literacy teaching, findings may be significantly different.

Second, essential literacy processing knowledge was important because it helped participants focus on students' developing competencies while they were also attending to improving their own teaching. It was surprising that preservice teachers were at times more strategic than inservice teachers in their focus on student processing—helping students use knowledge to do the "in-the-head" processing—as Karly challenged herself to do: "I just think how important it is to not only teach item knowledge but to get children to think—rather how to get *children* to do the *thinking*. And with my action plan—just reinforce and state purposes that are congruent with learning." One cannot conclude from this evidence that experienced teachers were not focused on student processing knowledge, since Pam did retarget her action plans in week 4, and classroom teachers generally taught critical thinking skills. Overall, though, the experienced teachers focused more on purpose for teaching, integrating literacy elements, and pacing of lessons, while the pre-service teachers targeted teaching for processing and resourcefulness (Table 2). Action plans, written strategically to teach students processing knowledge and advanced learning strategies, showed more promise for impacting teachers' thinking and actions.

When skillful implementation of teacher learning improves literacy instruction, all stakeholders benefit (Teitel, 2001). So long as its effectiveness continues to be validated over time, the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching may prove to be an enduring framework for improving the quality of teaching. As a result of improved teaching, the quality of students' intellectual work and achievement should also increase. A central aim of the Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching is to encourage preservice and inservice teachers of varying developmental levels to take more active roles in raising the quality of teaching and student learning across the board (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Such active participation was achieved in this small study, but the true litmus test will be whether these preservice and inservice teachers choose to continue to self-assess their literacy teaching as part of ongoing professional development. Active involvement in learning communities is one of five core standards encouraged by the National Board Professional Teaching Standards (www.nbpts.org).

Critical analysis of teaching should help preservice and inservice teachers to notice opportunities for improvement and further learning. Grant (2001) argues that "the only hope of [preservice teachers'] continued growth as professionals lies in their motivation and ability to evaluate themselves. . . . If the initial feeling after a teaching experience is positive, complete and fulfilling, only those with an attitude of self-criticism will bother to take a second look" (p. 245). Critical analysis holds true for both preservice and inservice teachers and may illuminate an important path for literacy educators. The Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action provides one possible way to encourage evaluation of teaching and learning through reflection-based practice.

References

Boyd, P. C., Boll, M., Brawner, L., & Villaume, S. K. (1998). Becoming reflective professionals: An exploration of preservice teachers' struggles as they translate language and literacy theory into practice. *Action in Teacher Education, 19*(4), 61-75.

Clay, M. M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Danielson, C. (2001). New trends in teacher evaluation. *Educational Leadership, 58*(5), 12-15.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership, 55*(5), 6-11.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological methods: A source book* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Eby, J. W. (1997). *Reflective planning, teaching, and education for the elementary school.* NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.) (pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.

Freppon, P., & Campbell, L. (2001). *A pilot study on the teacher learning instrument.* Paper presented at 2001 NRC 51st Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change.* NY: Teachers College Press.

Grant, P. A. (2001). The power of uncertainty: Reflections of pre-service literacy tutors. *Reflective Practice, 2*(2), 237-248.

Heaton, R. M., & Lampert, M. (1993). Learning to hear voices: Inventing a new pedagogy of teacher education. In D. Cohen, M. McLaughlin, & J. Talbert (Eds.), *Teaching for understanding: Challenges for policy and practice* (pp. 43-83). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Howard, B. B., & McCloskey, W. H. (2001). Evaluating experienced teachers. *Educational Leadership, 58*(5), 48-51.

Lyons, C. A., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Systems for change in literacy education: A guide to professional development.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher, 17*(2), 13-17.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2002, June 5). Five Core Propositions. Retrieved June 9, 2002, from *http://www.nbpts.org/about/coreprops.cfm*

Roskos, K. (2001). *Teaching, reading and writing: A core curriculum for educators* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education.

Roskos, K., Boehlen, S., & Walker, B. J. (2000). Learning the art of instructional conversation: The influence of self-assessment on teachers' instructional discourse in a reading clinic. *The Elementary School Journal, 100*(3), 229-252.

Sawyer, L. (2001). Revamping a teacher evaluation system. *Educational Leadership, 58*(5), 44-47.

Shulman, L. S. (1988). A union of insufficiencies: Strategies for teacher assessment in a period of national reform. *Educational Leadership, 46*(3), 36-41.

Sykes, G. (1996). Reform OF and AS professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 77*(7), 464-467.

Teitel, L. (2001). An assessment framework for professional development schools going beyond the leap of faith. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(1), 57-69.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* (M. Cole, Ed. and Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published in 1930)

Wold, L. S. (2000, November). *An Examination of Teachers' "Learning to Act" on Reflection.* Presented at the 50th Annual National Reading Conference, Scottsdale, AZ.

Wold, L. S. (2001, November). Self Assessment of Primary Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action. Presented at the College Reading Association Conference, Orlando, FL.

Wold, L. S. (2002). (In Press). An examination of teachers' "learning to act" on reflection. *Reading Research & Instruction.*

Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. (1985). Varieties of discourse in supervisory conferences. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 1*, 155-174.

Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. (1987). Teaching student teachers to reflect. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*, 23-28.

Appendix A. The Self-Assessment of Literacy Teaching for Teacher Reflection and Action

Functions of Preservice and Inservice Literacy Teaching, Developing (1) to Advanced (5)				
Preservice teaching		Inservice Teaching		
1	2	3	4	5
Descriptor: Is aware that she/he does not know procedures but chooses to learn. Teaches mainly item knowledge.	*Descriptor:* Demonstrates some procedural steps accurately and consistently. Teaches mainly item knowledge and some process knowledge.	*Descriptor:* Knows procedures but has some difficulty with decision making during implementation. Teaches beyond item knowledge for processing. Builds conceptual knowledge.	*Descriptor:* Uses procedures well and makes decisions based on student engagement and learning foci. Tries to challenge students with a balance of item and process knowledge tasks and teaches concepts for independent learning.	*Descriptor:* Integrates appropriate item and process knowledge, teaching consistently with established procedures to challenge students and enhance learning through meaningful extensions. Integrates conceptual learning in all teaching.
Engagement				
1a. shows an interest in learning procedures and working on engagement.	2a. is engaged in implementing procedures. Implements procedures somewhat consistently. Teaches mainly item knowledge and some process knowledge. Engagement is limited.	3a. begins to implement procedures somewhat consistently, but instruction does not always enhance student learning. Engagement is increasing.	4a. implements procedures consistently that support classroom management, student engagement, and learning. Engagement impacts learning positively.	5a. implements procedures with ease in all literacy contexts, which maximizes learning. Engagement is optimal because all students are actively involved.
Resourcefulness				
1b.bases practice in commonsense notions; relies on peer conversations to manage literacy procedures and/or inquiries.	2b. reads journals and other sources to gain a better understanding of literacy components and invites coaching.	3b. begins to apply resource learning and coaching support to improve implementation.	3b. applies resources consistently including coaching support for students' deep level learning.	5b. acts on coaching and resource knowledge to continuously improve teaching and maximize learning opportunities.
Item/process knowledge				
1c. teaches mainly item knowledge.	2c. teaches mainly item knowledge but begins to teach for student processing.	3c. teaches strategically for processing and student independence but inconsistent in item and process knowledge.	4c. teaches appropriate item and process knowledge based on students' responses and needs.	5c. teaches item and processing knowledge within an established routine for optimal learning.
Decision making				
1d. makes decisions but has limited support or evidence for doing so.	2d. attempts to make appropriate decisions but these are sometimes incongruous with learning goals.	3d. makes decisions that begin to support learning goals.	4d. makes decisions that are congruous with the focus of the lesson and connected to learning.	5d. makes strategic decisions based on a range of assessments, student needs, and learning goals.

Appendix A continued

Functions of Preservice and Inservice Literacy Teaching, Developing (1) to Advanced (5)

Preservice teaching		Inservice Teaching		
1	2	3	4	5
Purpose				
1e. does not state a clear purpose.	2e. states a clear purpose but tries to address too many foci that are incongruent with learning.	3e. states a clear purpose for targeted instruction.	4e. states purpose explicitly and connects to foci for optimizing student learning.	5e. states purpose explicitly that is then woven throughout the lesson for optimal, targeted instruction and closure about learning.
Pacing				
1f. paces the lesson inappropriately.	2f. paces the lesson but shows down time during teaching.	3f. paces the lesson well but timing is off.	4f. paces the lesson well; minimal down time.	5f. paces the lesson expertly with no down time.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B. Self-Assessment Rating Interview

Name______________________________ Grade level__________

Date______________________________

a. What is your rationale for the ratings?

b. What evidence can you share to validate how you have rated yourself?

c. After talking through your ratings and evidence, do you feel that your rating is on target and appropriate? If yes, no changes. If not, do you choose to revise any of your self-assessment ratings?

d. Did the process of assessing your literacy teaching challenge you in any worthwhile or strategic way?

e. Was the process of assessing your literacy teaching problematic in any way?

f. What did you learn from reviewing your action plans or from participating in this study that may help you become a better literacy educator?

PRESERVICE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND LITERACY STAFF DEVELOPMENT OF INSERVICE TEACHERS: EXPERIENCES, THEMES, AND POSSIBILITIES

Jane Brady Matanzo
Eliah j Watlington
Florida Atlantic University

Abstract

This paper describes an innovative staff development model that has been implemented in an elementary school. The model encourages inservice teachers to gain reading strategies and other literacy related teaching ideas implemented by preservice teachers in the inservice teachers' classrooms. Specifically, a detailed description of the preservice in-school program, its relationship to a three-dimensional model and interview process for a professional development school, and interview excerpts with the teachers as to the value of the preservice collaboration will be presented.

Introduction

School and university partnerships can increase the quantity and quality of preprofessional experiences as well as impact school instructional change (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). A trend is that numerous school personnel are seeking non-traditional ways to develop inservice opportunities for their teachers that will result in sustainable change and instructional improvement (Lambert, 2002). Although inservice teachers are generally given one or more opportunities during a school year for released time to attend workshops and other one or one-half day refueling opportunities, the change in instructional practices appears minimal. Fullan (1991) summarizes it well when he states, "Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that lead to no significant change in practice when teachers returned to their classrooms" (p. 315).

Likewise, it is not unusual for the preservice teacher to observe or participate in classrooms that appear to have little or no bearing on what is being taught and experienced in the university classroom (Levine, 2002). Levine is an advocate for professional development schools to make this connection by noting that they "take teacher learning seriously by providing seminars, problem-solving groups, and mini-courses that focus on student work. Such schools also socialize teacher candidates into a culture of inquiry and collegiality" (p. 65). For example, preservice students who had experiences in professional development schools were deemed more competent and confident than those having preservice experiences in more traditional settings (Houston, Hollis, Clay, Ligons, & Ruff, 1999; Shroyer, Wright, Kerr, & Weamer, 1996). One study (Grisham & Brink, 2001) focused on literacy practices that the researchers wanted their preservice students to become familiar with such as literature response groups, guided reading, and writing workshop. They arranged for groups of three to six students to simultaneously observe a given literacy innovation in what they deemed Model Classrooms, again in a professional development school. After the observation, the group met and dialogued with the demonstration teacher. They claimed that the uniqueness of their study was the intense degree of debriefing that took place immediately following the observation. Their data was significant in terms of the impact the debriefing sessions had and the carryover to future preservice practices.

The program described in this article is based on the concern that the literacy methodology connection between university expectations and school practices may not be parallel. It was initiated in one of the university's 12 designated professional development schools because of proximity and shared availability. However, it should be noted that such a program does not need to take place in a professional development school, but could be implemented wherever the administration and faculty were willing to have a professor and preservice students work with students in their classrooms. The focus of this article is not about the effectiveness of professional development schools but on the presence of preservice teachers in designated classrooms and the reactions to the preservice teacher's instructional practices by the classroom teachers. The paucity of available literature showing how pre- and inservice teachers might impact each other outside a professional development school, and particularly in literacy development, limits the broader development of a theoretical background.

The major purpose of this article is to describe a program that provided preservice teaching experiences for an initial reading course during scheduled class time under the guise and support of the university professor for five years in a given school. A secondary purpose of this article is to share the comments of nine teachers who worked with this instructor and various groups of preservice students during the same time frame but were interviewed with open-ended questions by the University Director of Staff Development for the Professional Development Schools for her purpose of ascertaining the effectiveness of the university's professional development schools. An unprobed and unexpected result of the interviews was that all nine teachers commented on this particular preservice program at their school.

Description of the Preservice In-School Program

The university professor who developed and implemented this program believes that preservice teachers learn to teach by practicing in authentic situations whenever possible. She purposely tried to have her two hour and 50 minute block Reading Methodology courses scheduled during public school hours so specified meetings of the course could be offered at the school, rather than only at the university. For evening courses, modifications included using after school programs; however, pairs of students often scheduled another day and conducted the lessons without the professor's presence if their personal work schedules were allowed. This course is generally taken during the second semester of the junior undergraduate year with a prerequisite being a language arts/children's literature combined course. This paper describes what can be accomplished when a university initial reading methodology course is scheduled to fuse with the elementary school schedule.

Six specific objectives served as the backbone in developing the program. The objectives were for preservice students during their initial reading methodology course to:

> 1) Observe and/or teach a variety of elementary-aged students, prekindergarten through grade five; 2) Choose and implement literacy approaches and strategies taught in the university course with real students in an authentic setting; 3) Select authentic and appropriate narrative and expository literature and other materials to prepare, develop, and implement lessons; 4) Cooperate, dialogue, and evaluate on given criteria in a peer teacher-peer coach relationship; 5) Use a variety of evaluation and reflection techniques; and 6) Observe and dialogue with classroom teachers and administrators.

Although most teacher preparation programs, especially those meeting NCATE approval, incorporate school based participatory and teaching experiences in their curricular requirements, the parameters of this program had several unique features. First, each student enrolled in the course experiences worked with a continuum of elementary-aged students encompassing a pre-kindergarten child, two groups of primary students, and two groups of intermediate students.

In addition, the preservice students were required to seek and implement narrative and/or expository self-selected text for specific types of lessons. They worked with a peer coach who evaluated the teaching peer on a given rubric. The two preservice students then exchanged roles. They met with a second group of primary or intermediate students and the former peer coach became the teacher while the previous peer teacher assumed the role of peer coach. Research has shown that it is important for preservice students to have a number of opportunities to evaluate and reflect upon the lesson and make comparisons with previous in-school experiences (Fazio 2000). Therefore, there were ample opportunities for immediate scaffolding, feedback, and debriefing sessions with peers and the professor as well as classroom teachers and the administrators when they are present. The classroom teacher was expected to be present while the preservice students were in the classroom. The school administrators encouraged the participating teachers to circulate among the subgroups to observe both their own students in a different teaching situation and the types of lessons and strategies the preservice students were teaching. The classroom teacher also had the opportunity to give informal feedback and positive encouragement to the preservice students before they left that classroom, a practice reinforced by previous research (Anderson, 1998). If any of the classrooms used that day could be covered during the debriefing period, the classroom teachers were invited to participate in the debriefing dialogue.

In order to understand more fully how each facet of the program is implemented, the following sections specifically describe the pre-kindergarten, primary, and intermediate experiences.

Pre-Kindergarten Experience

Each university student was assigned to a pre-kindergarten child enrolled in one of the preschool classes that existed at the host school to do an Emergent Literacy Observation They were given a variation of the Concepts of Print list (Clay, 1989) that included 13 items, one being for students to write or draw about the story read to them that was not an expectation in the original list. The students were asked to select at least three picture books appropriate for a preschool child and to ask the child to choose one that was not yet familiar. The child was asked such things as "Where should I begin reading?"; "Can you find the letter T on this page?"; "Will you show me a sentence on this page?"; "What do you think will happen next?"; and "Can you tell me about what happened in the story?"

The university students wrote an observation report that consisted of a brief description of the child, his/her responses to each of the 13 items, a summary of the child's responses and observed behaviors, and recommendations for adults interacting with the child to encourage further literacy. At the next class meeting back on the university campus, students working with three-year-olds were grouped together and students working with four-year-olds were grouped together. Each of the groups compared its findings within the age group and then compared similarities and differences between the age groups. This led to a greater understanding of emergent literacy and the variations within and between age groups that can occur.

During the five-year period, we were given the option by school administrators to conduct the Emergent Literacy Observation with a kindergarten class at the beginning of the school year. This is an option that might appeal to readers of this article. Again, each university student was paired with a kindergarten child. In this instance, the number of students in the university class equaled the number of students in the selected kindergarten class. If numbers of preservice students exceed the enrollment of a given kindergarten class, more than one kindergarten class or teacher-selected students from another kindergarten classroom could be used. The preservice students used the same 13 observation items used with pre-kindergarten students and wrote a report. At the next class meeting, the entire class shared the findings on their particular child and compared the similarities and differences among the 26 students in the kindergarten class. The students were amazed at the range of emergent literacy that included children having no idea of the front of a book to one child who was a fluent reader. These comparisons led to rich discussions on how to accommodate individual differences and the wide range of literacy knowledge in a kindergarten as well as the impact these differences might have on first grade reading instruction.

It should be noted that the Emergent Literacy Observation lasted approximately one hour. If preservice students finished early, they were to have an additional book to read or another appropriate activity to do with his or her pre-kindergarten student. The second hour of that first school visit was spent in primary and intermediate classrooms with students observing a guided reading lesson conducted by given classroom teachers and visiting with elementary students as they worked at various literacy centers in the respective classrooms. A debriefing session was held with the preservice students by the professor after the conclusion of both activities.

Primary Teaching Experiences

The university professor modeled the Language Experience Approach (LEA) (Allen, 1976; Stauffer, 1970) and subsequent skill development based on the solicited story. A variation in the traditional LEA was that students needed to include a step called MAD after the story was dictated and read several times to provide an opportunity for the students to experience revision and extension of the original work. The MAD step has the person to whom the story was dictated ask the students three things: 1) What would you like to **MODIFY** (change) about the story? 2) What would you like to **ADD** to the story? and 3) What would you like to **DELETE** (take away) from the story? Prior to going to the school to implement the LEA with first, second, and/or third grade students, the preservice students were assigned one grade level and required to create an appropriate motivational activity from which to develop a story.

Two separate 50-minute sessions were planned for each visit to the school for the primary grades. Each classroom was divided into three to four subgroups with four to six students in each group, depending on the size of the given class. The primary students were grouped and given nametags by the classroom teacher. The majority of the groups was heterogeneous and often included mainstreamed special education students and English Language Learners. Approximately four different LEA lessons were taught to four different groups within the same classroom simultaneously, which enabled the classroom teacher to observe four different lessons using the same literacy approach. Generally, four different classrooms at two or three different primary levels were used for each lesson assignment depending upon primary class sizes and preservice course enrollment. During the first 50-minute period, one of the peer partners conducted a LEA lesson and the other partner served as a peer coach. A twenty-minute break was allowed between the two sessions. During the second 50-minute period, the partner team moved to another classroom and exchanged roles with a new group at a different primary grade level. As a result each of the two preservice students saw the same approach used with different common motivators and two different grade groups. For example, the first preservice teacher might work with first graders using a collection of seashells as the motivator and the second preservice teacher might work with third graders who experienced making animals out of elongated balloons. The steps of the LEA process practiced were the same but at different levels of sophistication. For the primary lessons, the preservice students chose their peer partner. If an uneven number of preservice students existed, a group of three was formed. Two of the preservice students would be the peer coach for one peer teacher and confer on their evaluation and one of the preservice students would be a peer coach simultaneously for two peer teachers whose groups were placed in proximity to each other in the same classroom.

The role of the peer coach was multidimensional. The peer coach evaluated the preservice teacher on a list of steps expected to be in the lesson as well as on preparedness, organization, and time management. The rubric used consisted of a "Y" for yes was checked on a grid if the element was present, a "P" if it was partially present, and an "N" if the element was not present. At the bottom of the form, the peer coach praised the peer teacher and gave at least one constructive suggestion, which might refine the lesson implementation. The peer coach evaluation had no impact on the peer teacher's grade but was to give both partners the opportunity to learn the procedural steps of the Language Experience Approach and to be supportive of each other. The peer coach also served in the roles of assisting with materials, working with one or more students who might need special help or encouragement, especially English Language Learners, and served as a timekeeper and helpful pacesetter for the lesson. The peer teacher also evaluated him or herself using the same rubric that might agree or disagree with the peer coaches' perceptions. The peer partners were encouraged to discuss any perceptual differences and why they may have occurred. In addition, the peer teacher completed the back of the rubric form that requested four different responses that also incorporated the MAD concept: 1) How might you MODIFY your lesson plan and implementation? 2) What might you ADD to your lesson? 3) What might you DELETE from your lesson? and 4) What additional comments do you have about your lesson and its implementation? After both lessons were completed, the whole class convened at the school in an assigned room and debriefed. Prior to the debriefing, each preservice student completed a Reflection Card which was a 4x6 inch index card using Side 1 of the card to tell the best things about their teaching and Side 2 of the card to convey what they learned about teaching during that day's experiences.

The following week the same teams of preservice students returned to the school and, during a 50-minute period, taught their same assigned group of students skills based on the story dictated the week before. They needed to develop tasks that encouraged the use of phonemic awareness, visual discrimination, sight vocabulary, meaning vocabulary, and comprehension skills based on the story. They were encouraged to extend the story and to have a follow-up activity related to their motivational activity and subsequent story if time permitted. Similar procedural specific evaluation forms were developed for this second lesson with evaluations done by both the peer coach and peer teacher. There also was a debriefing session which was initiated by the completion of reflection cards asking the same things for both sides of the card as was done for the first lesson.

Intermediate Experiences

For the next three weeks, the preservice students were taught the Guided Reading/DRTA Procedure (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), the Question Answer Relationship (Raphael & McKinney, 1983; Raphael & Pearson, 1985; Raphael & Wonnacott, 1985), and instructional strategies appropriate to narrative materials such as the Story Map (Pearson, 1981), and Think, Pair, Share for Prediction and Retelling (Lyman & Tighe, 1981). A variation to the Guided Reading/DRTA Procedure was that retelling after reading was a required step.

They were taught retelling guidelines and ways to probe elementary students' thinking. The preservice students were assigned to a third, fourth, or fifth grade group of five to ten students depending on the sizes of each of the classrooms used and preservice enrollment. At least two different intermediate levels were used in approximately four different classrooms.

Preservice students were directed to self-select an appropriate narrative reading selection and make instructional copies for each student in the group with incremental reading stops marked so that students could predict throughout the lesson. Following a procedure similar to the primary experiences, there were partner pairs, two different groups in two different intermediate classrooms with the preservice students exchanging peer teaching and peer coaching roles, rubric evaluations, the MAD assessment that the peer teacher did, and a debriefing session initiated by completing a reflection card again asking: 1) What were the best things about your teaching today? and 2) What did you learn about teaching today? The main differences at the intermediate levels were that the lessons lasted one hour instead of 50 minutes, the groups were larger, the preservice students needed to search for appropriate narrative reading selections from quality children's literature, and the peer partner teams were assigned by the professor so students could experience observing different teaching styles.

The next two weeks were held in the university classroom with the professor modeling expository strategies such as the KWL (Ogle, 1986), Anticipatory Guides (Herber, 1978), Semantic Feature Analysis (Johnson & Pearson, 1984), and Semantic Mapping (Armbruster & Anderson, 1980). The preservice students then selected an expository selection which might be of interest to the same group of students taught the narrative lesson and made copies of that selection for each student in his or her assigned subgroup. The preservice students and professor then returned to the school and, using the same time frame and peer teacher/coach format, taught their second intermediate lesson implementing one or more instructional strategies with expository text. An added evaluation component to this lesson was that the intermediate students were given a form to evaluate the preservice teacher. The intermediate students enjoyed this and were quite serious in their approach. They commented on items such as 1) What was the best part of this lesson? 2) How did you like doing the (strategy/ies)? 3) What things did you especially like about this teacher? and 4) What other comments can you make about this lesson? The specific strategy names were inserted by the preservice teacher as they were self-selected and varied among the many lessons taught to the various sub-groups of intermediate students. At the bottom of the form, the intermediate students rated the teacher on a scale of 1-5 with five being the best and had to tell why they circled the chosen number. Some preservice students had the entire sub-group do one evaluation form while others had each member of the group do an individual evaluation form or with another intermediate peer. After both peer partners completed their lessons, the entire preservice class assembled as a whole to do peer and self-evaluations, reflection cards, and general debriefing on what had been gained from this lesson. They also reflected upon and discussed the continuum and benefits of their five experiences working with various levels of students and what they gained from meeting and dialoguing with teachers and administrators at the school.

Preservice Teacher Feedback

The preservice students had many reflection and evaluation opportunities. In general, their responses indicated that they felt that this continuum of in-school experiences helped them realize the progression of literacy growth, student attention spans, interests, and behavioral and skill differences. They found that approaches and strategies they were being taught at the university were effective and that they could implement them successfully. Many comments centered on what they learned about behavioral and time management. Their pacing of lessons greatly improved between the first primary lesson and the last intermediate lesson. They began to plan more in 10 to 15 minute time increments as they became aware of what might be or not be accomplished in a 50-minute or a one hour period. Some of the preservice teachers returned and volunteered on their own initiative to continue work with their subgroups of students and the respective classroom teachers.

Over the five-year period, the preservice students unanimously felt the peer coach was essential and helped them feel more secure. They commented that they might like to work with a team member once they became teachers, and noted seeing evidence in some of the classrooms of strategies and materials that were being presented in the methods' course. Two of the most frequent statements were "I really feel confident now in working with different groups and ages of students," and "I believe I am ready to teach reading. I can do it!"

The basic premises of this preservice program were to encourage greater preparedness in the teaching of reading as well as increase the preservice teachers' literacy related knowledge and teaching confidence. However, an unexpected result occurred as another program was simultaneously underway in the same school during this five-year period. The next two sections will describe that program and its serendipitous results that hinged on what these reading methodology preservice teachers were experiencing at this school.

Three Dimensional Professional Development School Staff Development Model

The same year the professor began the in-school program with preservice students for their initial reading methodology course, the university established twelve professional development schools in four service area districts. The professor was able to place the reading course preservice students in one of those professional development schools. The Director of the Professional Development Schools developed an innovative staff development model with three dimensions: 1) inquiry about teaching practice, 2) professional collegiality, and 3) the inclusion of preservice education. This model was aligned to the growth and practice model (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), the growth/change model (Darling-Hammond, Lieberman, McLaughlin, & Miller, 1992), and the developmental model (Sprinthall, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1996). These three similar models view staff development as a complex process that goes beyond teachers learning a series of skills or techniques (Pink & Hyde, 1992). Four common themes emerged based on the above three models:

1. Learning is a continuous growth process for both students and teachers and involves active engagement by the learners in the acquisition of knowledge. (Lieberman & Miller, 1992;Rice, 2002; Sparks & Richardson, 1997).
2. Teachers need staff development that supports the adult as a learner as a process that occurs while teachers are embedded in the world of teaching. (Sparks & Richardson, 1997; Sprinthall et al., 1996).
3. Collaboration is the major framework for teacher development. (Lieberman & Miller, 1992; Sampson, Foote, Fleener, & Moore 2001; Sparks & Richardson, 1997).
4. Staff development should be process oriented through building on inquiry and problem solving rather than on transmission of knowledge. (Watson, 1994).

In order to facilitate teacher's inquiry about teaching practice and professional collegiality, the university assigned a faculty member to be a liaison to each professional development school to model instructional techniques, conduct workshops, assist with the process of school improvement, design and conduct action research projects with school instructional staff to increase student achievement, and conference with teachers and grade level groups at their request. The faculty liaison was expected to be present in the school at least one day a week. This assignment could be part of the faculty load or an overload. The professor of the reading preservice students was the university faculty member assigned to the school where the preservice reading course program took place.

In addition to inquiry about teaching practice and professional collegiality, the Director added the inclusion of preservice education to the three-dimensional university model. The major thrust of including the preservice component was to provide more consistent placements for a General Teaching Practices course and for student teaching. Hence, an additional responsibility of the faculty liaison was to monitor preservice teacher participation. This third model dimension, inclusion of preservice education, coupled with the first two dimensions, formed a cyclic process. The process constituted teachers looking at practice, asking questions about practice, generating answers to the questions, trying out solutions in the context of the classroom, and then looking at practice again to restart the cyclic process. The reading preservice program established at that school was not initially considered an integral part of this Professional Development School Preservice Dimension, but as an additional professor planned activity that just happened to be held there.

The Director met with the teachers at each of the Professional Development Schools periodically over a five-year period. At the conclusion of a five-year implementation period, the Director held three separate interviews with teachers who had participated in the program all five years. Each interview was based on one of the three Professional Development School Model Dimensions. At the Professional Development School where the university professor took the reading course students, nine teachers had both worked in the Professional School Program and with the reading course students over the entire five year period. A total of 21 different teachers had worked with the reading course preservice students but were not involved in the Professional Development School Program for the entire five years. The program dimension and interview results discussed in this article are relative to the inclusion of the third dimension, the preservice reading course component.

Inservice Teacher Feedback

During the interview on the preservice dimension, the Director asked teachers if and or how did the preservice teachers impact what they did in their classrooms, and then just allowed the teachers to talk without further prompting. The Director recorded the teachers' comments. It was expected that the teachers would focus primarily on the practicum and student teaching experiences of preservice students in their given classrooms. However, the teachers made repeated references about how they valued preservice teachers delivering lessons planned in methods courses in their classroom setting. One teacher described this experience and its benefits:

> We get the (university professor's) classes coming in and taking over the class. We get to sit back and watch. That is exciting! She comes in every semester. She brings her group of students (preservice teachers). It is a two-session visit for my grade level. I divide my students into

> groups. Half the preservice teachers in my classroom have a lesson that they have prepared. They teach the lesson to their little group that involves some skill they are doing, generally something to do with reading. Each group's lesson is different. The other person from (professor's) class is observing and recording. They (preservice teachers) come back a week later and conduct a follow-up lesson with the same assigned group. My students are very excited about it because it is something different. I am very excited because I get to go around and look at all these different ideas and see what they are doing at (university). It is fun to see these new things.
>
> That was a very good learning experience. I tell everybody it doesn't matter how long you stay in education; you still don't know everything. You can learn so much. I learned a lot that I didn't know I was learning. Well, I did know that I was learning; but, it was so interesting, that I didn't.

Teachers talked about why this activity constituted an ongoing type of informal staff development that led to change. Teachers spoke most often about the value of having first hand access to effective reading strategies and trends. While observing the lessons, teachers noticed new ideas, techniques, activities, and assessments that increased student motivation and learning. They also were able to observe the behaviors and interests of their own students.

> (By) having the university students here you are gaining as a teacher, so much knowledge, so many ideas in education. You are gaining. If you pay attention to them, you are going to learn a lot and you are going to learn a lot of new trends.
>
> They (preservice teachers) always like to bring in literature and things that they have used in school. That is really a perk for me.
>
> I just think that we benefit so greatly from their ideas on curriculum and things they come out with. It is refreshing. It is something new.
>
> Some of us are adding these successful techniques to our practice.
>
> I think I have grown a lot. I learned to adapt better by looking at some of the things they (preservice students) did. Since I have been out of school, something new would come out. They would share different things, which I would use.

Teachers expressed a greater degree of comfort by adding what they had concretely observed to their practice after seeing success with their students in the "real world" of the classroom. It was valuable that the preservice lesson presentations were viewed in the context of their daily teaching setting. One teacher said working with the preservice teachers helped her "to look at things . . . evaluation . . . it just makes me look more analytically at my own personal beliefs of education and how I assess children on a daily basis."

Teachers also shared how they believed their elementary students had benefited from the participation in the staff development model. Teachers talked about the give and take nature of this type of staff development. Schon (1983) stated that the professional growth of teachers was framed by their ability to think about teaching while they were teaching. Because the classrooms presented situations that were complex, puzzling, and challenging, teachers needed to convert the situations into a problem. This process, called problem setting, helped teachers come up with alternative solutions to the noticed problems they needed to solve. Schon suggested collaboration with colleagues as one method to encourage reflection on and inquiry about practice. Teachers told about how working with preservice teachers, "gives us (teachers) the chance to reflect on our own practices and share what we know with these preservice teachers." They also shared how preservice students help them combat stagnation and receive a renewed sense of excitement about teaching. Their comments included the following statements:

> That is an idea that I got from the university students. Those were neat things that we had never done before. They spice it up. It is not the same ole [*sic*] boring stuff for us teachers year after year.
>
> They have come from the university with up-to-date current ideas . . . I see their enthusiasm . . . made me (teacher) more excited about teaching too.

One teacher tied the experience of having preservice students in his classroom to ways learning can ripple out in different directions:

> For instance, you have the professor coming with students. Just like her, students taught me the QAR with questioning and everything. You, in turn, show that (QAR) to these different groups of preservice students including student teacher interns that come into my classroom from other experiences outside this professor's instruction or from one of the staff developments you might have had.

Teachers also discussed how the faculty had become more cohesive as a result of an increased atmosphere of collegiality due to the addition of the university professor and the preservice teachers as an accepted part of the school staff. Teachers commented they had interacted with other teachers and shared the ideas they had seen in the presented lessons. All the teachers talked about perceiving themselves as a professional educator and a learner in this give and take relationship.

Further proof that these teachers valued this staff development is evidenced by their continued participation in requesting that the preservice reading students come to their classrooms. All nine teachers who initially volunteered to participate during the first year remained engaged in having the preservice teachers teach reading lessons to their students for the entire five-year period. Informal staff development was received as a result of working with and observing the university professor and preservice teachers. Teachers reported this informal staff development translated into professional growth.

Summary and Conclusions

In order to provide authentic planning, teaching, and evaluation experiences for preservice teachers during their first of two reading methodology courses, a university professor developed a relationship with a local school. The preservice teachers visited that school five times during a semester course. Experiences included 1) initial modeling of in-school expectations by the university professor, 2) conducting an Emergent Literacy Observation with a pre-kindergartener or beginning kindergartener, 3) observing a classroom teacher at the school teach a guided reading lesson, 4) observing and interacting with primary and intermediate students at classroom literacy centers, 5) teaching primary students a Language Experience Lesson and developing literacy skills based on the constructed story, 6) teaching an intermediate grade a guided reading lesson based on a narrative literature selection, and 7) implementing an intermediate grade expository lesson using one or more learned instructional strategies. The preservice students teamed with a peer coach during each teaching experience who evaluated them on a given rubric. The student teacher also evaluated him or herself using the same rubric and completed a form that encouraged one to consider what might be modified, added, or deleted to the taught lesson in order to refine that lesson if it were to be retaught. Debriefing sessions with the university professor and available school personnel concluded each school visit. The preservice teachers felt more knowledgeable and confident in their teaching of reading at the end of these five in-school experiences, which took place during the regularly scheduled reading methodology course period. These experiences took place with approximately 270 different preservice students over a five-year period.

During this same time frame, the Director of Staff Development for the university's 12 professional development schools conducted interviews with teachers at the school where the preservice experiences were enjoyed. The interviews indicated that nine teachers who had participated throughout the five years felt positive about having the preservice students work with their students as the classroom teacher observed. They considered this opportunity as a professional reward that helped them learn, reflect on, make changes in practice, gain new and workable teaching ideas, and keep up with current trends and instructional practices in reading. The teachers felt important and contributory to the local university program and often wanted to have even more affiliation with the university professor and with having preservice students participate and teach in their classrooms.

An original intent of the university professor's program for preservice students was not to provide staff development for the inservice teachers, but to strengthen the teaching capabilities of the preservice students. However, the inservice teachers also seemed to grow professionally by modifying and adding to their current teaching practices. Therefore, it is highly recommended that practicing teachers and preservice teachers have opportunities to work together and to see the implementation of each other in various classroom situations. An opportunity was provided for each of the parties to grow professionally and learn from the in-school experiences. It is encouraged that an active relationship be planned between preservice and inservice teachers, even if there is not the presence of a professional development school. As these two groups of teachers gain respect for each other's capabilities and offerings, transcripted dialogues might offer additional insights for this and other types of programs that might provide learning opportunities and greater collegiality among university faculty, preservice students, and school-based teachers and administrators.

References

Abdal-Haqq, I. (1998). *Professional development schools: Weighing the evidence.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Allen, R. V. (1976). *Language experiences for communication.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Anderson, N. A. (1998). Providing feedback to preservice teachers of reading in field settings. *Reading Research and Instruction, 37*(2), 123-136.

Armbruster, B. B., & Anderson, T. H. (1980). *The effect of mapping on the free recall of expository text* (Tech. Rep. No. 160). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading.

Clay, M. M (1989). Concepts about print in English and other languages. *Reading Teacher, 42*(4), 268-276.

Connelly, M., & Clandinin, J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience.* New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Darling-Hammond, L., Lieberman, A., McLaughlin, M., & Miller, L. (1992). *Professional development and restructuring.* New York: Columbia University, National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching.

Fazio, M. (2000). Constructive comprehension and metacognitive strategy instruction in a field- based teacher education program. In P. E. Linder, W. M. Linek, E. G. Sturtevant, & J. R. Dugan, (Eds.), *Literacy at a new horizon.* Readyville, TN: The College Reading Association.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change.* New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Grisham, D. L., & Brink, B. (2000). Model classrooms: A theory to practice link for Preservice Teacher Education. *Journal of Reading Education, 26*(1), 1-8.

Herber, H. L. (1978). *Teaching reading in content areas* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Houston, W. R., Hollis, I. Y., Clay, D., Ligons, C. M., & Roff, L., (1999). Effects of collaboration on urban teacher education programs and professional development schools. In D. Berg & J. McIntyre (Eds.). *Research on professional development schools, Teacher education yearbook VII* (pp. 29-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Johnson, D. D., & Pearson, P. D. (1984). *Teaching reading vocabulary* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Lambert, L. (2002). A framework for shared leadership. *Educational Leadership, 47*(3), 37-40.

Levine, M. (2002). Why invest in professional development schools? *Educational Leadership, 47*(3), 65-68.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L., (1992). Teacher development in professional practice schools. In M. Levine (Ed.), *Professional practice schools: Linking teacher education and school reform* (pp. 105-123). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Lyman, F., & Tighe, J. (1981). Clarksville, MD: Howard County Public Schools.

Ogle, D. M. (1986). K-W-L: A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text. *Reading Teacher, 39*(6), 364-370.

Pearson, P. D. (1981). Asking questions about stories. In *Ginn Occasional Papers: Writing in reading and language arts* (Monograph No. 15). Lexington, MA: Ginn & Co. Reprinted in A. J. Harris & E. R. Sipay (Eds.), *Readings in reading instruction* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman, 1984.

Pink, W., & Hyde, A. (1992). *Staff development: Enhancing human potential.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Raphael, T. E., & McKinney, J. (1983). An examination of fifth- and eighth-grade children's question answering behavior: An instructional study in metacognition. *Journal of Reading Behavior,* 15, 67-86.

Raphael, T. E., & Pearson, P. D. (1985). Increasing students' awareness of sources of information for answering questions. *American Educational Research Journal, 22,* 217-236.

Raphael, T. E., & Wonnacott, C. A. (1985). Heightening fourth-grade students' sensitivity to sources of information for answering comprehension questions. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20,* 282-296.

Rice, E. H. (2002). The collaboration process in professional development schools: Results of a meta-ethnography, 1990-1998. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(1), 55-67.

Sampson, M. B., Foote, M., Fleener, C., & Moore, L. (2001). Exploring the evolution of public school teachers' perceptions of university/public school partnerships: The quest for collaborative preparation of literacy teachers. In W. M. Linek, E. G. Sturtevant, J. R. Dugan, & P. E. Linder (Eds.), *Celebrating the voices of literacy.* Readyville, TN: The College Reading Association.

Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shroyer, G., Wright, F., Kerr, E., & Weamer, D. (1996, April). *Expertise in elementary math and science teaching: Evaluating an innovative preservice preparation model.* Paper presented at the National Association for Research in Science Teaching, St. Louis, Missouri.

Sparks, D., & Richardson, J. (1997). A primer on professional development. *Journal of Staff Development, 18*(4), 1-8.

Sprinthall, N., Reiman, A., & Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1996). Teacher professional development. In Sikula, J. (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (2nd ed., pp. 666-703). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Stauffer, R. G. (1970). *The Language-Experience Approach to the teaching of reading.* New York: Harper & Row.

Watson, R. (1994). The role of professional development in restructuring schools. *Journal of Staff Development, 15*(2), 24-27.

TEACHERS' JUDGMENTS OF WORD IDENTIFICATION SOFTWARE

Barbara J. Fox

North Carolina State University

Abstract

This study investigated teachers' judgments of the utility of word identification software for its potential to support classroom instruction. Twelve experienced teachers rated from five to seven word identification software programs, using a thirty item questionnaire that was divided into the six design principles of Audio, Graphics, Content, Practice, Navigation, and Management. The teachers differentiated among the seven software programs, even though the programs were designed to accomplish the same instructional goal, that of increasing children's word identification skills. Teachers rated three programs significantly higher, and two significantly lower for utility supporting classroom instruction. Implications for the characteristics of software that teachers prefer are discussed, and recommendations for providing experiences judging software in teacher education programs are proposed.

A convergence of technology and a new federal focus on phonics may have a significant impact on reading instruction in American classrooms. Computers and software are now almost as visible in classrooms as leveled books, basal readers, workbooks, learning games, and manipulatives (Smerdon, et al., 2000). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, also known as the Elementary and Secondary Act Authorization bill, authorized nearly one billion dollars to fund in the 2002 fiscal year new "scientific, research-based" reading programs for children in prekindergarten through third grade. More funding for these programs should be forthcoming in 2003 through 2007. Scientific reading methods are considered to be systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (US Department of Education, 2002). Phonics is arguably the most prominent of these skill areas (Schemo, 2002). As defined by the Partnership for Reading (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001), systematic phonics is organized, sequential letter-sound instruction with many different opportunities to practice letter-sound relationships. The emphasis on systematic phonics is particularly noteworthy in the context of recent reports calling for teaching letter-sounds and how to apply them when reading (National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

In light of the widespread availability of computers in classrooms and the increasing federal emphasis on teaching phonics in the early grades, some teachers might consider adding word identification software to their classroom reading programs. There is some justification for using software to compliment, extend or enhance classroom reading instruction. In a report on the prevention of reading failure, the National Reading Panel (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) concluded that the use of well-designed software improves reading achievement. Similarly, MacArthur, Ferritti, Okolo, and Cavalier (2001) concluded that the research literature provides qualified support for using software programs to improve the word identification skills of struggling readers. More specifically, word identification software has been shown to increase both phonological awareness (Mitchell & Fox, 2001) and word identification skills (Barker & Torgeson, 1995; Jones, Torgesen, & Sexton, 1987; Mioduser, Tur-Kaspa, & Leitner, 2000), particularly when used with children at-risk of reading failure. Moreover, using literacy software may produce quicker learning gains than traditional reading instruction (van Daal & Reitsma, 2000).

Most word identification software typically consists of skill-focused, drill-and-practice programs. The design of skill-based software provides enough structure for children to work individually, without guidance or assistance from their teachers (Whitaker, Schwartz, & Vockell, 1989). Because there is a certain amount of child autonomy built into the design of drill-and-practice software, teachers may then spend class time on introducing new information and on creating opportunities for children to apply word identification knowledge in reading and writing contexts, rather than on setting aside time for practicing phonics skills. Skill-based software programs may also offer teachers a way to adjust practice to the needs of individual children (Kuder & Hasit, 2002). However, positive effects on reading achievement are most likely when teachers use high-quality software on a long-term basis (van Daal & Reitsma, 2000). It is not surprising, then, that the National Research Council (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) recommended that teachers should pay careful attention to the quality of instructional materials, including computer software programs.

The purpose of this study was to conduct a preliminary investigation of whether experienced teachers differentiate among word identification software in its potential to help children develop the word identification skills they are learning in school. If teachers judge word identification software programs to be similar in their potential to effectively support classroom learning, then software selection would simply entail finding a program that is compatible with the computer systems in the school. On the other hand, if teachers judge software programs to differ in their potential to help children learn the word identification skills they are being taught in school, then the programs warrant careful analysis before they are selected for use in classrooms. In this situation, teachers would need to evaluate the software themselves in order to be confident that software meets the needs of the students whom they teach (Morrison & Lowther, 2002; NAEYC, 1996). And, additionally, it would be important for teacher education programs to include software evaluation in their curricula so as to provide preservice and inservice teachers with the knowledge and experiences for judging software and for making wise decisions when selecting software.

Method

Participants were twelve teachers enrolled in a graduate course on teaching reading in the elementary school. Teachers had an average of 3.8 years of classroom experience with a standard deviation of 2.8 years. All participants had experience teaching students who read on a kindergarten through third grade level. Eleven of the participants were female, one was male. The teachers were familiar with computers and software programs, and had access to computers in their own classrooms, in school computer laboratories, at home, and on the university campus.

The study was conducted in a MacIntosh computer laboratory on a university campus located in a southeastern state. The laboratory was equipped with G8 MacIntosh computers and an instructor's station. Two copies of seven word identification software programs were loaded on MacIntosh computers by a laboratory technician before the teachers entered the laboratory. The technician loaded the programs randomly, with the exception that no two like programs were loaded on adjacent computers.

Software programs included in the study met the following criteria: 1. the software targeted children in grade three and below; 2. word identification was the sole focus or the dominant focus; 3. programs cost no more that seventy-five dollars; and 4. the software ran on the G8 MacIntosh computers. Software for older, struggling readers was eliminated as a consequence of including only programs that were appropriate for children in the early elementary grades. Furthermore, software programs were excluded if they did not predominantly focus on developing the word identification skills consistent with the federal focus on scientific, research-based instruction. Programs that focused on activities such as listening to stories read aloud, naming colors, or carrying out mathematical computation are examples of the types of software excluded from the study. Limiting cost to seventy-five dollars or less provided for a group of programs that were inexpensive enough to be purchased at the building level for classroom use, should district policy permit schools and teachers to do this. Some older software did not run on the MacIntosh G8 computers, and hence these software programs were excluded from the study.

The activities in the seven programs focused on a similar set of word identification skills and knowledge, as shown in the content feature analysis in Table 1. The homogeneity of skills and related knowledge is a consequence of selecting drill-and-practice software with a primary focus on word identification skills. These drill-and-practice software programs did not set out to teach new information. The assumption underlying drill-and-practice software was that teachers had already taught the information and skills that children were going to practice. Alternatively, tutorial programs actually teach new information, provide corrective feedback, and explain why responses are or are not correct. Since there were no word identification software programs that could be clearly classified as tutorial and that also met the criteria for inclusion in the study, the study was limited to only drill-and-practice programs.

All seven software programs were menu driven, and children interacted with them by clicking on buttons or icons. The software ran on Windows 3.1 or higher operating systems. Six ran on a MacIntosh 7.1 operating system, one on an 8.6 operating system. Six programs featured animals or fanciful characters as on-screen guides; one used a character from children's fiction. Program A was designed for pre-kindergarten through second grade, Programs B and G for pre-kindergarten through first grade, Program C for kindergarten through third grade, Program E for pre-kindergarten through kindergarten, Program F for the first grade, and Program G for first through third grade.

Table 1. Feature Analysis of Word Identification Skills and Related Knowledge in the Seven Software Programs

Word Identification Skills and Related Knowledge	Prog A	Prog B	Prog C	Prog D	Prog E	Prog F	Prog G
Letter Names	X	X		X	X		
Letter-Sound Associations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rimes	X	X	X		X	X	X
Word Building	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rhyme Awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Phonemic Awareness*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reading Words in Context	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Writing Sentences or Stories	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Attention to individual phonemes by identifying sounds, pronouncing words phoneme-by-phoneme, or associating sounds and letters in words.*

Teachers rated the programs for their perceived potential utility in supporting classroom instruction. In rating the software, teachers used a questionnaire specifically tailored to word identification programs, as shown in Appendix A. The questionnaire was divided into the six design principles of: Audio, Graphics, Application, Navigation, Practice, and Management (Fox & Mitchell, 2000). Each design principle was further divided into four characteristics and an overall principle rating, for a total of five questions for each of the six principles.

Questions were specifically tailored to word identification software because generic questions may not be particularly helpful for evaluating software, in that generic questions do not focus on characteristics that are important for presenting letter and sound information (Bitter & Pierson, 1999). Teachers rated each design principle on a scale in which a 1. designated Extremely Effective, 2. Very Effective, 3. Effective, 4. Somewhat Effective, or 5. Not Effective for supporting classroom word identification instruction.

The teachers were given questionnaires as they entered the laboratory. The name of each program was taped to each computer work station. Teachers had three hours to complete one questionnaire for five of the seven software programs. Teachers were free to rate the software in any order, and turned in each questionnaire as it was completed. As a consequence of rotation among computers, nine teachers completed questionnaires for five programs and for the other two programs all twelve teachers completed questionnaires. The software programs were not discussed before the teachers completed the questionnaires, with the exception of telling the teachers that all seven programs were designed to improve word identification skills in children from preschooler to third grader.

Results

The numerical values for the characteristics of each design principle were summed to provide a Total Score for each of the design principles. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the six design principles for the seven programs. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for the total scores across all six design principles on each program. Two-tailed t-tests were performed to determine whether the average total means differed significantly among programs. Statistically significant differences were found for Program A, $t(8) = -5.429$, $p<.001$, Program B, $t(11) = -3.153$, $p<.009$, Program C, $t(8) = -2.278$, $p<.05$, Program F, $t(8) = 3.798$, $p<.004$, and Program G, $t(9) = 4.046$, $p<.0001$. In this analysis, a negative score indicates a high preference, while a positive score indicates a negative preference. This is a consequence of the rating scale in which the highest preference (Extremely Effective) was accorded a value of 1 and the lowest preference (Not Effective) a value of 5.

There were no significant differences among Programs A, B, and C, and no significant differences between Programs F and G.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Design Principles of the Seven Word Identification Software Programs

	Design Principles					
Programs	Audio	Graphics	Application	Navigation	Practice	Management
A						
M	1.54	1.92	1.67	1.09	1.92	3.64
SD	.66	.64	.78	.30	.52	.81
B						
M	1.62	2.15	2.42	1.69	2.08	2.31
SD	.55	.69	.67	.85	.76	1.38
C						
M	2.00	1.85	2.46	2.17	2.23	3.17
SD	.45	.55	.52	.72	.73	1.11
D						
M	2.62	2.77	2.62	1.54	3.08	3.92
SD	.96	.73	.87	.66	.67	.76
E						
M	2.18	3.00	3.42	4.09	2.70	3.64
SD	.40	1.13	.90	1.04	1.06	1.50
F						
M	3.77	3.23	3.08	2.17	3.42	3.50
SD	.83	.44	.86	.72	.79	1.18
G						
M	3.20	3.42	3.09	3.09	2.91	4.09
SD	.79	.79	.70	1.38	.30	.70

** N = 9, with the exception of Programs B and D where N = 12*

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Total Scores for the Seven Software Programs

Program	M	SD	n
A	1.90	.42	9
B	2.08	.65	12
C	2.78	.52	9
D	2.79	.35	12
E	3.13	.79	9
F	3.31	.50	9
G	3.41	.54	9

Table 4. Percentage of Teachers Rating Design Principles for the Seven Software Programs

		Software Programs						
Principles	Rating Values	Prog A	Prog B	Prog C	Prog D	Prog E	Prog F	Prog G
Audio	1	46	46	9	8	0	0	0
	2	38	46	82	46	82	8	10
	3	15	8	9	23	18	23	70
	4	0	0	0	23	0	54	10
	5	0	0	0	0	0	15	10
Graphics	1	23	15	23	0	8	0	0
	2	62	54	69	38	25	0	8
	3	15	31	8	46	33	77	50
	4	0	0	0	15	25	23	33
	5	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
Application	1	50	8	0	8	0	0	0
	2	33	42	54	38	17	31	18
	3	17	50	46	38	33	31	55
	4	0	0	0	15	42	38	27
	5	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
Navigation	1	0	54	17	54	0	17	0
	2	9	23	50	38	9	50	55
	3	18	23	33	8	18	33	9
	4	27	0	0	0	27	0	9
	5	45	0	0	0	45	0	27
Practice	1	17	15	17	0	0	0	0
	2	75	69	50	17	46	8	9
	3	8	8	33	58	15	50	91
	4	0	8	0	25	31	33	0
	5	0	0	0	0	81	7	0
Management	1	0	38	0	0	18	0	0
	2	17	23	33	0	0	10	0
	3	25	25	33	31	18	50	18
	4	50	25	17	54	27	10	55
	5	8	8	17	15	36	30	27

Upon further investigation with t-tests, the design principles of Navigation, $t(68) = -.4469$, $p<.001$, and Audio, $t(68) = -2.750$, $p<.001$, were rated significantly higher than other principles. Management was rated significantly lower, $t(68) = 6.910$, $p<.001$. No other design principle reached significance. Table 4 shows the percentage of teachers who rated the six design principles as Extremely Effective to Very Effective for the seven programs. Table 5 shows the average ratings for each characteristic of the design principles. The characteristics that received the highest ratings were: 1. speech pace in Audio, 2.

Table 5. Average Scores for Characteristic of the Design Principles Across the Seven Software Programs

	Means for Characteristics of Design Principles										
Principle	Characteristic	M	Characteristic	M	Characteristic	M	Characteristic	M	Characteristic	M	Overall M
Audio	Voices	2.27	Speech Pace	2.01	"uh" When Necessary	2.40	Audio-Tecnhics	2.35	Music	2.29	2.40
Graphics	Pictures	2.04	Fonts	3.38	Attention-Getting	2.38	Animation	2.23	Cultural Diversity	3.33	2.61
Application	Upper-case Letters	2.06	Lower-case Letters	1.45	High Utility Words	2.52	Apply in Context	2.68	Apply in Writing	3.36	2.67
Navigation	Clear Introduction	1.99	Site Map	2.08	Bypass Introduction	2.53	Child Selects Activities	2.13	Exit Without Completing	1.85	2.40
Practice	Feedback	3.80	Multi-level Activities	2.62	Variety of Activities	2.44	Repeat Words and Sounds	2.27	Multiple Practice	2.27	2.62
Management	Teachers Enter Application	3.33	Monitor Individuals	3.68	Teacher Selects Activities	3.13	Document Progress	3.68	Individualize Application	3.55	2.67

understandability of pictures in Graphics, 3. use of lower-case letters in Application, 4. ability to exit a section or activity before completing it in Navigation, 5. options to hear letter names and sounds, and multiple opportunities to practice in Practice, and 6. ability for the teacher to select activities in Management.

Discussion and Implications

This preliminary study is limited by the use of only seven word identification software programs, and hence findings cannot be generalized to all word identification software. Because only software with a word identification emphasis and only software for children in grade three and below was included in this study, the findings are not generalizeable to software that does not emphasize word identification or to software that targets children in the upper elementary grades. The lack of open-ended survey questions and interviews limit the interpretations of these data to only the specific queries on the questionnaire. The small number of teachers who participated, and the limited amount of time available in the computer laboratory to evaluate software also limit the study. The teachers themselves were veterans of the classroom and, therefore, these results cannot be generalized to preservice teachers. Consequently, these findings represent a first attempt to examine how experienced teachers judge software for its potential to effectively support word identification learning.

Of the seven software programs evaluated by the teachers, Programs A, B, and C were given statistically higher ratings, whereas Programs F and G were given lower ratings. Therefore, it can be inferred that these teachers differentiated among the programs with regard to their perceived potential to support the learning of word identification skills. Teachers rated the Audio and Navigation design principles significantly higher than the principles of Graphics, Application, Practice, and Management. Fifty percent or more of the teachers favorably rated the Audio in programs A, B, C, D, and E. Whereas the animated on-screen guides in these programs used standard English pronunciation, the on-screen guide in the one of the least preferred programs spoke non-standard English. Navigation, the only other favorably rated principle, was rated as Extremely or Very Effective in Programs B, C, D, F, and G. In these programs, children could exit activities before completing them, explanations could be bypassed once children were familiar with activities, and the activities were clearly marked on site maps. In contrast, Programs A and Program E did not provide onscreen guidance for locating and entering activities. The specific graphic and navigation qualities that teachers believe to be the most effective in promoting the learning of word identification skills are topics for further research.

While the Graphics design principle was not significantly different from other principles, it is interesting to note that fifty percent or more of the teachers judged Graphics to be Extremely or Very Effective in only Programs A, B, and C. Van Daal & Reitsma (2000) suggested that two benefits of software are to make classroom instruction more efficient, and to enable high-progress children to work more or less independently in the classroom. For these benefits to be realized, children must understand and interpret the graphics without explanations and assistance from their teachers. Interestingly, forty-one percent of the teachers rated the graphics in Program G as Somewhat or Not Effective. The graphics in Program G were related to the overall theme of the software. Perhaps the teachers felt that understanding the graphics in this program required previous exposure to the theme, exposure would require going beyond everyday experiences and typical storybook themes. Further research is needed to clarify the characteristics of graphics that teachers perceive as important for supporting word identification learning in the early elementary grades.

Application was rated as Extremely Effective or Very Effective in only the most preferred programs, Programs A, B, and C. Interestingly, both Programs B and G were designed for children in pre-kindergarten through first grade, yet only the application in Program B was judged as Extremely or Very Effective. Furthermore, Programs C and F both use distinct levels of difficulty within each separate activity, yet only the Application in Program C was highly rated. It might be inferred, then, that these teachers judged the Application design principle on multiple dimensions that were not directly dependent on the specific information practiced, the reading ability of potential users, or the presence of skill levels within individual activities. Future research might examine in more detail the significance teachers assign to factors such as the match between a software program and the language arts curriculum, and the scope and range of activities for children in the early elementary grades.

The characteristics of opportunities to hear words and sounds more than once, and opportunities to practice word identification skills in multiple activities received the highest rating in the Practice design principle. The relatively low rating given to the feedback characteristic is particularly noteworthy. On average, teachers judged this characteristic to be 3.80, which approaches a rating of Somewhat Effective. The feedback in these seven software programs did not explain why incorrect answers were wrong, nor did feedback explain why correct answers were right. This type of right-wrong feedback is entirely consistent with drill-and-practice software. In giving only right-wrong feedback, software activities provided children with opportunities to practice skills and knowledge they have already been taught, but did not provide children with insight into why their answers were correct or incorrect. Further research might investigate the type of feedback teachers judge as effective for learning word identification skills. This information could then be used to select software for classroom use, and additionally could also be used when designing future software programs.

Management was rated significantly lower than the other five design principles. While using the management component in software to identify appropriate activities enhances literacy learning (Mioduser, Tur-Kaspa, & Leitner, 2000), an overall percentage of 3.44 (Table 2) suggests that these teachers did not judge the management in these programs to be particularly beneficial. All seven programs required users to sign-in, and provided progress reports for individual children. Programs A, B, D, E, and G offered teachers the opportunity to either pre-select activities for children or to allow children to freely explore activities. Programs A, B, and E also allowed teachers to decide if children could exit activities before completing them. Only Program B was rated by fifty percent of the teachers as having a Management principle that is Extremely or Very Effective in its perceived potential to support learning. On further inspection, Program B had a toolbar at the bottom of the screen that gave teachers direct access to password-protected management options. Easy access to teacher-only management options may require less teacher effort and, therefore, may make fewer demands on teacher time. Further research is needed to clarify exactly why teachers gave the Management principle the lowest rating, and the Management characteristics that teachers judge as most supportive of classroom learning.

In the mid 1990s the government set out technology goals that included training teachers in how to use technology to support learning, providing classrooms with technology, and integrating effective software and on-line learning into classroom programs (Riley, Kunin, Smith, & Roberts, 1996). Overall, this effort has been a success, in that most classrooms have at least one computer, many classrooms are Internet capable, and education software is plentiful. However, computers in classrooms are not likely to enhance word recognition abilities unless teachers themselves understand the impact of technology within the context of their own literacy programs (Honey, Culp, & Carrigg, 1999).

The widespread availability of computers in classrooms means that more teachers are likely to have the option to use educational software, and may even be encouraged to do so by some principals and supervisors. The U.S. Department of Education found that eighty-four percent of teachers in 1999 had at least one computer in their classrooms, thirty-eight percent had from two to five computers, and ten percent had more than five computers (Smerdon, et al, 2000). In stark contrast to the widespread availability of computers, only one third of teachers reported that they felt well prepared to use the computer and Internet options at their disposal. The data from this preliminary study suggests that experienced teachers have definite opinions about the potential effectiveness of word identification software for enhancing learning in their classrooms. The question, then, is how teacher educators might provide preservice and inservice teachers with the guidance and experiences necessary for judging software and for selecting software that effectively supports ongoing classroom instruction.

In providing preservice and inservice teachers with the guidance and experiences necessary to select software that will compliment, enhance and extend classroom instruction, teacher educators might provide their students with: 1. hands-on experiences reviewing software; 2. opportunities to use structured rating scales or questionnaires to guide software reviews; 3. settings in which teachers collaborate with others when evaluating software; 4. opportunities to determine the match between software and the school or classroom reading curriculum; 5. experiences reading published reviews; and 6. experiences comparing published reviews with teachers' own judgments.

There are many published software reviews available online or in professional journals. While some reviews are potentially helpful, these reviews should not circumvent opportunities for teachers to explore software on their own and to form their own opinions. Computer laboratories provide a useful setting for reviewing software. In exploring software in a computer laboratory, teachers have opportunities to discuss the software with learning partners or in small groups, thereby gaining insight from the perspectives of their peers. Before asking preservice and inservice teachers to review software in computer laboratories, teacher educators must first obtain multiple copies of software programs, assure that software will run in the computers, and set aside enough time for preservice and inservice teachers to thoroughly review and explore each software program.

It is also recommended that teacher educators give preservice and inservice teaches a wide range of software to evaluate. After reviewing a range of content-diverse software programs, it is suggested that teacher educators select for review a handful of content-similar programs, such as programs that focus only on word identification, comprehension, writing, or interactive storybooks. Comparing and contrasting programs that aim to accomplish the same goal helps preservice and inservice teachers develop insight into how content-similar software programs may differ in their potential to support classroom instruction. This, in turn, helps teachers decide if the information and activities in software programs are consistent with best practice and with the classroom reading program.

While the seven software programs in this study share many common content features, as shown in Table 1, the teachers in this study judged the software to be a combination of apples and oranges; that is, significantly different in their potential to support classroom instruction and word identification learning. From this study we might infer that word identification software with similar aims is not necessarily equal in its perceived potential to enhance classroom learning. Future research might consider the impact software reviews may have on the software teachers select, effective methods for guiding preservice and inservice teacher in their selection of software, the effect of various types of rewards and feedback on children's learning, and the effect of various management components on how teachers use software in their classrooms.

In light of the increasing availability of technology in classrooms and in light of the perceived differences in word identification software, teacher education programs might be strengthened by providing preservice and inservice teachers with guidance and experience in judging software for its potential to effectively augment classroom word identification instruction. In a milieu in which software and other electronically delivered tasks are increasingly available and, indeed, perceived by some to be desirable for supporting instruction, it is important for teacher educators to provide preservice and inservice teachers with the background knowledge and experiences they need to make wise decisions when selecting software for use in their own classrooms.

References

Armbruster, B. B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read kindergarten through grade 3.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Barker, T. A., & Torgesen, J. K. (1995). An evaluation of computer-assisted instruction in phonological awareness with below average readers. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 13*, 89-103.

Bitter, G. G., & Pierson, M. E. (1999). *Using technology in the classroom* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Fox, B. J., & Mitchell, M. J. (2000). Using technology to support word identification, spelling, and vocabulary acquisition. In S. B. Wepner, W. J. Valmont, & R. Thurlow (Eds.), *Linking literacy and technology: A guide for K-8 classrooms* (pp. 42-75). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Heinecke, W. F., Blasi, L., Milman, N., & Washington, L. (1999). *New directions in the evaluation of the effectiveness of educational technology* [On-line]. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved January 7, 2002 from HtmlResAnchor http://www.ed.gov/Technology/TechConf/ 1999/whitepaper8.html

Honey, M., Culp, K. M., & Carrigg, F. (1999). *Perspectives on technology and education research: Lessons from the past and present* [On-line]. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved January 7, 2002 from HtmlResAnchor http://www.ed.gov/Technology/TechConf/1999/ -whitepapers/paper1./html

Jones, K. U., Torgesen, J. K., & Sexton, M. A. (1987). Using computer-guided practice to increase decoding fluency in learning disabled children: A study using hint and hunt I program. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 20*, 122-128.

Kuder, S. J., & Hasit, C. (2002). *Enhancing literacy for all students.* Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.

MacArthur, C. A., Ferretti, R. P., Okolo, C. M., & Cavalier, A. R. (2001). Technology applications for students with literacy problems: A critical review. *The Elementary School Journal, 101*, 273-301.

Mioduser, D., Tur-Kaspa, H., & Leitner, I. (2000). The learning value of computer-based instruction of early reading skills. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 16*, 54-63.

Mitchell, M. J., & Fox, B. J. (2001). The effects of computer software for developing phonological awareness in low-progress readers. *Reading Research and Instruction, 40* (4), 281-298.

Morrison, G. R., & Lowther, D. L. (2002). *Integrating computer technology into the classroom* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.

NAEYC, (1996). *NAEYC position statement: Technology and young children—ages three through eight* [On-line]. National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved January 11, 2002 from: HtmlResAnchor http://www.naeyc.org/resources/position_ statements/pstech98.htm

National Reading Panel (2000). Teaching Children to Read: *An Evidence Based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* Rockville, MD: National Institutes of Health.

Riley, R. W., Kunin, M. M., Smith, M. S., & Roberts, L. G. (1996). *Getting America's students ready for the 21st Century: Meeting the technology literacy challenge* [On-line]. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved January 1, 2002 from HtmlResAnchor http://www.ed.gov/Technology/ Plan/NatTechPlan.html

Schemo, D. J. (2002). *Education bill urges new emphasis on phonics* [On-line]. New York Times. Retrieved January 9, 2002 from HtmlResAnchor http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/09/ politics/09/EDUC.html

Smerdon, B., Cronen, S., Lanahan, L., Anderson, J., Iannoti, N., Angeles, A., & Green, B. (2000). *Teachers' tools for the 21st century: A report on teachers' use of technology.* (NCES Publication No. 2000-102). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Snow, C. E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

The Facts: Reading Achievement. (2002). [On-line]. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved January 11, 2002 from: HtmlResAnchor http://www.ed.gov/Technology/TechConf/1999/ whitepapers/paper8.html

van Daal, V. H. P., & Reitsma, P. (2000). Computer-assisted learning to read and spell: Results from two pilot studies. *Journal of Research in Reading, 23*, 181-193.

Whitaker, B. T., Schwartz, E., & Vockell, E. L. (1989). *The computer in the reading curriculum.* NY: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Appendix. Word Identification Software Evaluation Questionnaire

Please decide how effective *(name of software)* would be for helping children develop the identification skills they are learning in school. The questionnaire is divided into six sections: (1) *Speech and Language,* (2) *Print, Pictures and Animation,* (3) *Content,* (4) *Navigation.* (5) *Practice,* and (6) *Management*. There are five questions in each section. Please circle the number that corresponds to the scale below:

1. extremely effective 2. very effective 3. effective
4. somewhat effective 5. not effective

Speech and Language

How the voices, words, and pronunciation of sounds promote learning the alphabet and phonics.

1. How effective are the voices in pronouncing words that are easy to understand? **1 2 3 4 5**
2. How effective is the software at using words that are familiar to children? **1 2 3 4 5**
3. How effective is the software in helping children *hear* sounds in words, such as the "m" sound in "mouse?" **1 2 3 4 5**
4. How effective is the software at using rhyming words ("cat, hat, bat") to help children understand and *hear* rhyme? **1 2 3 4 5**
5. How do you rate the **overall effectiveness** of the voices, words and pronunciation? **1 2 3 4 5**

Print, Pictures, and Animation

How print, pictures, and animation promote learning the alphabet and phonics.

1. How effective is the software at using a representative selection of upper-case (A, B, C) and lower-case (a, b, c) letters? **1 2 3 4 5**
2. How effective are the pictures at representing easy-to-recognize, familiar objects? **1 2 3 4 5**
3. How effective is the animation at keeping children focused on activities without distracting them from learning? **1 2 3 4 5**
4. How effective are pictures in depicting characters and settings that are consistent with children's background knowledge? **1 2 3 4 5**
5. How do you rate the **overall effectiveness** of the print, pictures and animation? **1 2 3 4 5**

Content

What children see and do to learn the alphabet and phonics.

1. How effective is the software in helping children learn to *read* rhyming words? **1 2 3 4 5**
2. How effective is the software in helping children learn letter-sound associations, such as the sound of ***b*** in **boat** or the ***m*** in **mouse**? **1 2 3 4 5**
3. How effective is the software at helping children use phonics to sound out words in sentences or stories? **1 2 3 4 5**
4. How effective is the software at helping children use their knowledge of letter-sounds to spell words, such as adding ***b*** to **_at** to spell b**at** or adding ***sh*** to **__ell** to spell ***sh*****ell**? **1 2 3 4 5**
5. How do you rate the **overall effectiveness** of the content? **1 2 3 4 5**

Navigation

The ease with which children find their way around the software program.

1. How effective is the software at making activities easy for children to find? **1 2 3 4 5**
2. How effective is the software at allowing children to exit an activity *before* they have finished it? **1 2 3 4 5**
3. How effective is the software at allowing children to bypass activities that they have already completed/mastered? **1 2 3 4 5**
4. How effective is the software at allowing children to bypass introductions and instructions for activities that they are already familiar with? **1 2 3 4 5**
5. How do you rate the **overall effectiveness** of navigation? **1 2 3 4 5**

Practice

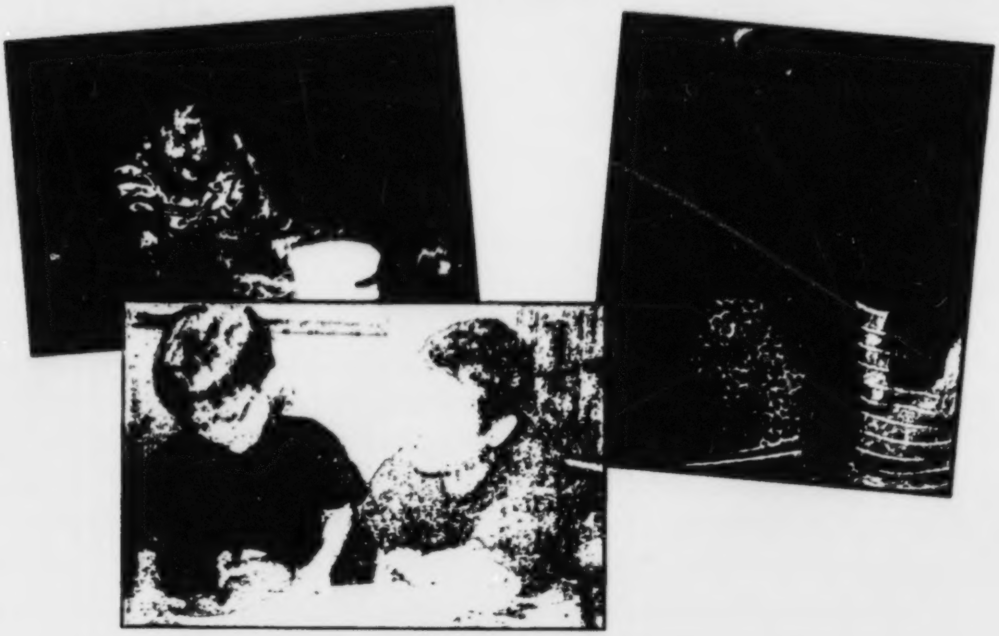
Opportunities to practice naming letters and using phonics.

1. How effective is the software at giving children practice with both easy and hard material? **1 2 3 4 5**
2. How effective is the software at giving children different opportunities to practice naming the *same* letters or using the *same* phonics skills? **1 2 3 4 5**
3. How effective is the software at giving feedback on correct and incorrect answers? **1 2 3 4 5**
4. How do you rate the effectiveness of rewards to encourage children to do their best when practicing letter names and letter-sounds? **1 2 3 4 5**
5. How do you rate the **overall effectiveness** of practice? **1 2 3 4 5**

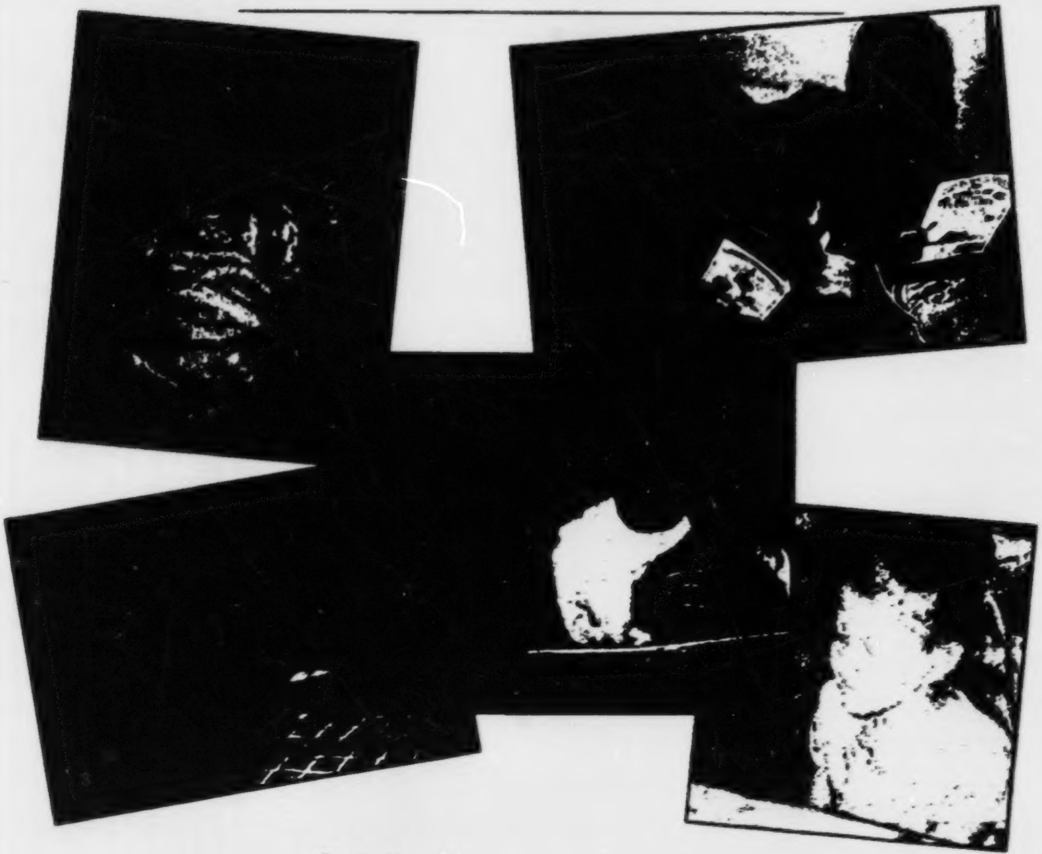
Management

How you control the software to promote learning the alphabet and phonics.

1. How do you rate the effectiveness of the software at giving *you* a record of children's progress? **1 2 3 4 5**
2. How effective is the software at allowing *you* to select the letter names and letter-sounds for children to learn and practice? **1 2 3 4 5**
3. How do you rate the effectiveness of the software at allowing *you* to select the level of difficulty of different letter name and letter-sound activities? **1 2 3 4 5**
4. How effective is the software at blocking children from accessing the site where *you* monitor activities? **1 2 3 4 5**
5. How do you rate the **overall effectiveness** of management? **1 2 3 4 5**



THE FACES OF CHANGE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPLES, BATS AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY TEACHING: COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH IN LITERACY AT AN URBAN CHARTER SCHOOL

Mary Lou Morton
Nancy L. Williams

University of South Florida

Abstract

This paper presents the efforts of two university professors as they join with classroom teachers in a small (140 student) charter school. The school was created by the university and the local school district to serve traditionally marginalized students of poverty living within the city limits. The professors were invited to help the teachers investigate literacy practices that would stimulate improved reading and writing achievement. Research based best practices and transdisciplinary instruction informed the collaborative work.

Investigative procedures included observation notes, notes from ongoing conversations, student work, as well as formal and informal interviews with teachers, the principal, and students. Ongoing analysis of collaborative practices, teacher and principal frustrations and desires, and student involvement in learning were studied. The researchers confronted the challenges of collaborative action research: the need to continually work to establish mutual respect and trust, patience for change to happen, and insight into students' learning strengths and needs.

> "I love teaching here. These kids are my life." "But I feel that we don't have enough support to set up our curriculum." "We have state standards, district standards, and our school mission, but we need help to apply those to our special population." "Our kids' low test scores drive us nuts! What can we do about them?" "The children living in this area are smart and deserve to have teachers who help them see that!"

Teachers in this Charter School of 140 students poured out their frustrations to us as we came together in our first meeting to discuss the possibility of working with them. We were overwhelmed with the eagerness and openness of the teachers who chose to work in this charter school that has a special mission of serving a transient population of students from low-income families living close to the university. As professors of reading and literacy education at the local university, we were excited about this opportunity to connect with classrooms and teachers. Yet the messy job of dealing with a wide variety of curricular reading perspectives, touted by the teachers and the principal, left us with concern about our ability to carry out the challenge of being literacy consultants. We kept in mind Fullen's (1993) first lesson in the process of change: "You Can't Mandate What Matters," and decided to adopt the process of collaborative action research to work with the teachers. The school and teachers are described in the next section.

Background of the Study

This study is a collaborative action research that takes place in a charter school in the southeast. The average income in the county was $36,894, however, the average income in the specific area served by the charter school was $6,500 with fifty per cent of the people being unemployed (Charter School Annual Report, 1999-2000 School Year). Of the approximately 140 students the demographics were as follows: 59% African American, 20% European American, 13% Hispanic, 6% Multiracial, and 2% Asian. Eighty-eight percent of the children qualified for free or reduced lunch.

A researcher at the university decided to tackle the problem of inconsistent attendance and poor academic progress of the university-area children by creating a foundation that would provide for funding for a charter school to be closely associated with the university. This school would serve the children from the university community area and would provide a setting where the children would be able to stay in the same school even if their family had to move to a different housing situation. Grants built the base for the Children At-Risk Foundation that resulted in the charter school and regular district per-pupil allotment sustained it. In addition, business partnerships provided contributions for technology. Title One funds supported aides in every classroom.

Participants

At the time of this study, seven different teachers in the charter school delivered instruction. Three of the teachers were European American, one was Hispanic, two were African American, and one was of Asian descent. Each classroom had a fully certified teacher and a full-time aide. One second grade also had a student teacher. There were two kindergarten classes, two first grade classes, two second grade classes, and one third grade class. In addition, there was a full-time special education teacher who "floated" among all the classrooms team teaching with the classroom teachers. Pseudonyms are used for all participants to honor confidentiality.

Even though the teachers at the Charter School were actually removed from the stress of conforming to narrow guidelines that come from political pressures in the regular schools, they still felt encumbered by them. They worried about the testing results of their students. The "A" to "F" grading of the schools in the state hovered over their choices of pedagogy. Although they were told that they were to work toward the mission of the school that called for the use of innovative teaching methods and research-based best practices (Cunningham, Moore, Cunningham, & Moore, 2000; Goodman, Ed., 1998; Pressely, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001) stressing the need for instruction to be varied and tuned into the characteristics of the children, the confining strictures of more skill/drill practices were most commonly used as they were viewed as necessary to prepare for state standardized testing measures.

Purpose of the Study

The issue of increasing low academic performance of minority and less-privileged children is a serious concern (Mahiri, 1998; Neisser, Boodoo, Bouchard, Boykin, Brody, Ceci, Halpern, Loehlin, Perloff, Sternberg, & Urbina, 1996). The U.S. Census Bureau's population survey of March 2000-2001, reported that 16.2 % of children under 18 years of age live below the poverty threshold. Considering the fact that approximately one out of six children lives in poverty in the United States, this results in a great number of children who begin school with major strikes against them, placing them at risk for low academic achievement (Payne, 1998; Sherman, 1994).

This collaborative action research is oriented around the questions: *How can two researchers from the university collaborate with the faculty and staff of this Charter School to facilitate greater literacy achievement for its students? How can the use of transdisciplinary methods help the Charter School work towards its mission of improving achievement?*

Conceptual Framework

Action Research

Characteristics of action research guided this study. We, the researchers, wanted to become planners and viewers of classroom learning along with the teachers to stimulate Dewey's ideas of teachers working together to solve their own problems (1916). Stringer (1996) offers three themes emanating from various action researchers that are helpful for this study. He suggests that processes of action research will include the following: 1. Empirical and reflective or interpretive data, 2. People involved are participants (not "subjects"), and 3. Result will be practical for the participants (p.xvi). In this way, we wanted to be able to collaborate with teachers in their search for ways to improve the literacy achievement of their students.

Kurt Lewin (1948), the first scholar to use the term action research (Schmuck, 1997), proposed that action research provided a method for democratic involvement in solving social problems. Action research has been a popular form of research designed to improve schools in the United Kingdom since the 1970s (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). The goal in this type of research is to study what is happening in situations along with the participants and to improve the conditions by enabling the participants to become better informed and gain more control over their situation. "AR [Action research] thus is a process co-managed by the interested parties, not a technique applied by a professional researcher to other people" (p. 96).

Schmuck (1997) describes two different forms of action research: proactive and responsive. The proactive form results in an action being taken immediately, data collected on its impact; reflection and interpretation carried out which lead to a new action. The responsive method begins with data collection, is followed by data interpretation, incorporation of new action, then reflection on that step and so on in a continuous analysis and reflection pattern. Greenwood and Levin (1998) refer to this as the scientific pattern of action research. The responsive method is what we chose to enact as we felt that observing what was actually being done first would better inform our suggestions for action.

Setting Up Collaboration

The American Heritage College Dictionary (1993) states that to collaborate is, "To work together in an intellectual effort" (p. 273). It was the belief of these researchers that the teachers and researchers needed to be of equal importance in this intellectual endeavor in order to establish a situation where mutual respect would develop. Through mutual respect, it was believed that a trusting relationship would evolve that would enable both teachers and researchers to learn from the project and together develop effective literacy practices. This type of research is described by Flinders (1992) using a relational ethics framework: "Relational ethics focuses on our respect for the people with whom we work and study, prompting us to seek guidance in the heuristic themes of collaboration, avoidance of imposition, and confirmation" (p. 235). The challenge in this type of research is to maintain patience in learning about the setting, thoroughly listening to the concerns of the teachers, and learning about the children, while setting up a relationship where mutual respect could develop. With this type of collaboration, action research can be carried out that seeks to abide by democratic principles of valuing the individual participants, facilitating empowering experiences, and seeking the common good (Greenwood & Levin, 1998).

Methodology

This is a qualitative research study designed to capture the personal, professional, and synergetic features of the Charter School's teachers and staff (Creswell, 1994). The researchers used various methods to chronicle, describe, and interpret the functioning of the school.

Data Collection

This literacy study began with an observation time span of two months. During this time, the researchers visited classrooms, talked with teachers, students, and staff, and took notes about the classroom setup, materials, instruction, and student responses. These observations were shared with the teachers. This period of time was a trust-building process when we were able to get to know the teachers and their concerns. We believe that this provided an opportunity for the teachers to become more comfortable with us and learn that we could be trusted to act thoughtfully and in the best interest of the children.

Following this time, the researchers investigated ideas of "best researched literacy practices" (Gambrell, Morrow, Neuman, & Pressley, 1999; Goodman, K., 1998), learning patterns of children from high poverty and "star" teachers who work with them (Haberman, 1995), and learning characteristics of African American and Hispanic students (Kuykendall, 1992; Rickford, 2001). These ideas were used as models for suggesting future changes. We met with the teachers in informal one-on-one meetings, teachers' meetings, and two retreats held for the faculty, once at the beginning of the Fall, 2000, school year, and another time in January, 2001 for collaboration purposes. In addition to the observational data included notes from informal interviews/conversations with teachers, the principal, and the office manager, notes of conversations with students, samples of classroom reading and writing assessments, and notes of the more formal faculty meetings, as well as end-of-the-year (2001) audiotapes of the teachers. One teacher volunteered to have his class videotaped.

Conducting qualitative research requires an openness to emerging ideas, a flexibility toward unexpected changes in events, patience in data collection, attentiveness to one's own biases, and particularly in collaborative action research, a willingness to look at data from many different perspectives noting when the observed is at variance from the action plans. Triangulation of data was accomplished by capturing the researchers' differing perspectives, those of the teachers, and the principal with whom we met regularly. Field notes were written up following our presence at the school.

Data Analysis

Analysis was ongoing as we recognized emerging themes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Wolcott, 1990, 1994). We would mark our notes as to the major topics that captured our attention each week. Through use of the constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) we combined some of the original topics, dropped topics that called for less of our attention or did not contribute to understanding how to influence better literacy learning. We first categorized themes by each individual teacher so we could describe our different perspectives of each classroom, then commonalities among the teachers were studied. The researchers met weekly after our school visits and reviewed observation notes. From this practice, we inductively developed inclusive themes, which are included under the following categories: teachers' pedagogy and curricular choices, children's involvement in learning, relationships among the teachers that influenced their teaching habits, and our role in the school.

Data Presentation

Following our visits in all classrooms through the spring semester of 2000, we asked which teachers were interested in working more closely with us. All seven teachers warmly welcomed us into their classrooms to visit the children, work one-on-one with specific students and read with small reading groups. However, it was not until the following school year that serious collaboration began.

Throughout September, 2000, we worked with the new principal at the school to discuss the merits of thematic, interdisciplinary instruction. Interdisciplinary instruction blends various subject areas (or disciplines) of math, science, language arts, and social studies together in learning experiences that stimulate active engagement (Pappas, Kiefer, & Levstik, 1990; Tchudi, 1994) and strengthen learners' curiosity through seeing the connectedness of information similar to how people solve problems in daily living (Fiske, 1991; Roberts & Kellough, 2000). We chose to refer to this process as transdisciplinary (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1994) as we thought that this term more closely related to the use of pedagogy to transform instruction that will connect more closely with students in interdisciplinary, thematic instruction. The principal asked the teachers to list two or three themes they might like to develop in their classroom and from those "Wish Lists," we ordered resource books, which we then organized thematically into containers. Examples of the themes were: farms, animals, frogs, friends, child/adult relationships, weather, insects, and dinosaurs. In addition, we created a container of poetry texts and African American picture storybooks. Teachers were reluctant to use the books at first, aside from using one periodically as a read aloud, and they remained filed in the office.

Patience is Rewarded

Our mutual comfort gradually increased and changes slowly began in some classrooms. During October of the 2000 school year, we demonstrated transdisciplinary pedagogy (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1994) centered around the book *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney (1982). Through this presentation, the teachers were able to experience the use of a quality piece of children's literature, embedded phonics and vocabulary instruction, and active learning ideas in social studies, math, and science as well as visual and performing arts (Morton & Ochoa-Becker, 2000). This transdisciplinary orientation of instruction implies that teaching, children's inquiry and daily problems of living are melded together across subject areas transforming learning into a meaningful flow that includes issues important to the children. In this way, teaching and learning support the individual concerns and collective realities of living in a democracy while working together to respect differences and well-being of the community.

Teachers' Pedagogy and Curricular Choices

Initial Reading Instruction

Initial observations presented a picture of reading instruction in all classrooms that was mainly teaching of phonemic awareness with efforts toward memorization of words in non-contextual situations. The leveled-books series by Ribgy, Literacy Tree, (1997) was used most often in K-2nd grade classrooms and the Harcourt Brace basal series was used in third grade. Vocabulary was taught by being written on charts and referred to for memorization purposes usually done in a direct instruction manner. Reading stories aside from the basal and enjoying literature were not a common sight during the course of the school day. This led the researchers to investigate with the teachers their beliefs about learning, particularly for the population of students being served. One kindergarten teacher, Nina, who had been a top graduate from the nearby university in teacher education, explained her choices:

> I use a great deal of worksheets, which I know is criticized at the university. Even though they are just in kindergarten, these kids need to get used to having to sit still and work on papers. I also teach using themes. Right now [Spring, 2001], we are studying African animals. They can find Africa on the world map [she points to a map on the wall] and I am teaching them the names of all the different animals. They also write about them in their journals. It's good for them.

Nina also added that she worked with small groups reading the little Literacy Tree (Rigby, 1997) books when the aide worked with the children doing seatwork. Nina mainly used a traditional instructional mode whereby the children sat still, quietly and listened to her teach them about the topic.

She valued their attention and would snap her fingers to regain control. She believed that imposing discipline—body control and work on worksheets—was what the children mainly needed. Nina chose to not work with us, yet she welcomed us into her room at anytime.

The other kindergarten teacher, Andrea, also welcomed us in. She chose to have the children involved in hands-on activities following up on the stories read in the Literacy Tree books, such as cutting and gluing shapes related to a story about a clown or learning how to make popcorn and counting the exploded kernals. Her class was not as quiet as the other kindergarten as she believed strongly in having the children be involved in dialogue regularly. Andrea, a new teacher as of January (replacing a teacher who left), chose interactive, language-building instruction that was closely tuned to the children's needs. Although she was willing to work with us, she truly did not need help other than regular supportive comments to reinforce her growing self-confidence. When we came to visit, she would greet us with a hug and have the children tell us "Hi."

Working With Liz

One second grade teacher, Liz stated in September, "I am interested in teaching using themes as our vision proposes, but I have never done that before. My undergraduate major was in special education and I never learned how to develop interdisciplinary units. Please help me!" She decided to begin with the theme of "apples." She decorated with apples around her classroom, the children's name tags had apples on them, the alphabet across the front of the room had apples on it, the children's names were written on apple cards on the disciplinary chart, and Liz began the year by reading a picture book about Johnny Appleseed. They read a variety of books about him including one I brought to her, *Johnny Appleseed* by Reeve Lindbergh (1990). For the month of October, Liz and her class studied bats. She used books obtained from the library and the Rigby Literacy Tree (1997) for second grade. They made bats out of construction paper and hung them around the room as decorations for Halloween. November and December were consumed with preparation for the Christmas program. In January, Liz decided to carry out an author study of Leo Lionni beginning with his book, *Swimmy* (1963). Liz followed up the reading by having the children write about how to work together (as Swimmy did) to solve problems. When I came into her room after the writing, she cheerily exclaimed,

> I was so surprised that they [the children] would say so much. Look at their writing [hanging on the wall]. They really got into our discussion and thought about how they were involved in similar situations of needing to help each other. The spelling is even better than I thought it would be. We really need to work on their spacing [between words],

> though, and some of the handwriting. . . . oh dear. They have even asked to read it again.

Next she read *It's Mine* (1986). The children's writing included tales about not wanting to share, times they have been scared and how someone helped them, how they had to take care of younger siblings, the frustration with a non-sharing class member, and fears in general. Again, Liz was delighted with the children's discussions and writing.

In February, 2001, I demonstrated lessons with the book *Frederick* (1967). The class had already read the book together, round-robin style, but Liz was concerned that a few children were not able to figure out some of the words. As a result, I demonstrated using "Guess the Covered Word" (Cunningham, 2000) activity to facilitate use of reading strategies that incorporate meaning (semantics), sound-symbol association (phonics), and language sense (syntax) as Clay (1985) suggests. An example of taking this reading activity to a transformational level arose with a child's sensitive comment.

I had children partnered up and I asked two children to read the first page of the story, *Frederick*, (Lionni, 1967) in concert which read, "All along the meadow where the cows grazed and the horses ran, there was an old stone wall." Two different children read the second page together, "In that wall, not far from the barn and the granary, a chatty family of field mice had their home." The next page was written on sentence strips and placed in the pocket chart: "But the farmers had moved away, the barn was abandoned, and the granary stood empty." The word "abandoned" had been concealed by a section of a sentence strip. The children were encouraged to be detectives, use clues in the meaning of the words read so far, and guess what that covered word was. They guessed "empty," "alone," "quiet," "old," and "cold." I uncovered the first letter and they guessed "away." Once I uncovered the "b" (so "ab" showed), Carl called out, "Abandoned."

I uncovered the word "abandoned" and showed how the sounds he said did match the letters in the word. I then asked, "What does abandoned mean?"

"Gone," "alone," "empty" were offered. Carl, who was usually very quiet and reluctant to speak, raised his hand again and explained, "I know. It is when your dad wakes you up in the middle of the night to leave your apartment because you don't have the rent money." Two other children said that had happened to them also.

Liz and I talked later that this would be an excellent time to study about different places to live such as trailers, apartments, and houses. It would also be an opportune time to learn about how rent is charged, how to get help with paying for rent, how school can help you prepare for having higher paying jobs. These topics and the resultant questions that would arise from the children and the teacher would easily spread across disciplines into math, science, social studies, democratic decisionmaking, as well as the arts through the aesthetics connected with where we live; in other words, opportunities to be connected to daily living and problem solving. Liz chose to read one other Lionni book, *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse* (1969) and carry out writing response activities to the story which she used to teach editing techniques, but she did not go beyond that step to relate further to the children's lives.

Working With Mike

Mike, the third grade teacher, was beginning his third year of teaching. He and Liz had only taught at this school. Mike came to the collaborative meetings about curriculum development, and welcomed the researchers into his room, but was not interested in attempting to change his instructional practices until the final semester of 2001. He often stated, "I have just never experienced teaching using themes. I feel that I have just gotten an idea about what I should be doing in teaching (using traditional instruction) and I am not ready to try anything different." He continued to follow the basal manual and mainly used memorization as a method for teaching vocabulary.

When visiting Mike's room, he always welcomed us and invited us to join the class. We would sit with a group of children and enter into the round-robin pattern of reading aloud that he had planned. Until he was ready, we felt it was not wise to model any different strategy in his class. Although this was difficult to do, we needed to gain Mike's trust before attempting to give him new ideas.

Finally, in January of 2001, Mike came to us and said he would like to meet with us to discuss how he could add more variety to his teaching. We began to model more interactive reading processes such as reader's theater (Ruddell, 1999), partner reading aloud, reading with groups of three and four voices in unison. Little-by-little, we saw Mike add variations to his teaching. He began discussing vocabulary more and demonstrated meanings of words such as drawing the shape of a snow machine on the board and acting out how you would sit on it and start it. He gradually asked students to act out words as well.

In April, 2001, Mike asked if we could suggest a book that he could read with his class that would relate closer to their lives. We then suggested the book, *The Missing Gator of Gumbo-Limbo* (George, 1992). This book takes place in the Florida Everglades and is about the mysterious adventures of some young children. Mike then ordered other picture books about the Everglades and videos. We showed him how to use various instructional strategies to scaffold the children's progress in figuring out unknown words and developing comprehension. Eventually, he displayed the children's beautiful artwork and writing done in response to daily chapter reading.

In May, Mike thanked us warmly and said,

> "It was so important that you be here. I hope you didn't think I was being unfriendly, but I just had to take some time. I just didn't have the courage or knowledge to do anything differently. The children need to learn how to behave and I concentrated so much on that, but I did see how much they got into the book you gave me. Isn't their artwork somethin'! I can't believe how good some of them are. They did not want to stop even though the reading was difficult for some of them. Look at Joe's [picture]. He is a fantastic artist even though he can not read the book. I want to find other books by [Jean Craighead] George."

In addition, he used the topic, the Everglades, in all of the content areas—word problems in math, science, social studies, and words about the Everglades for spelling. We were delighted to hear Mike's words and his body language told even more. He was more energetic in his teaching, smiled more often, and displayed his happier feeling about his teaching.

Working With John

In September, 2000, John, the other second grade teacher, explained that he felt that he needed to use direct instruction to set up classroom control. He went on, "Once I get that set up, then I will be able to think about literature and discussion." This was his first year of teaching. He had majored in special education and had done his final internship at the school under the guidance of the inclusion, special education teacher. In fact, that teacher was now the roaming special education teacher. By October, 2000, he was ready to expand his teaching tactics.

John excitedly called to us early in the morning before the children arrived during the first week in October. He asked us to come into his room to see how he was getting his children to discuss some poetry. He had taken the newly purchased book, *Honey I Love: And Other Poems* (Greenfield, 1978) from the poetry collection in the office and was using these poems to teach reading. He wrote the poem on chart paper and would have the class circle around him on the floor while they read together. He used the reading strategies he learned in his coursework and others we shared with him to guide the children's reading of the text. What he was amazed with was how much the children enjoyed the poetry. He exclaimed,

> "They want to read the poem over and over. They want to read it to everyone who comes to our room. One little girl will finish her work and come over on the carpet and sit by herself and read the book over and over. We have used words from it for our spelling words, copied it for writing, and they had to take their copy home to read to their parents. I asked the parents to write back about the poem. The parents write about how much they love their child. It has been so heartwarming to see their reactions."

John continued to seek us out about children's literature titles that would help him stimulate the children's thinking and, as he described it, "give them hope and a goal" for their future. John described his teaching as being part disciplinarian, part facilitator to learn knowledge, but mainly a mentor to enable his students to think of themselves as learners with a promise. He decorated his desk with a picture of himself as a child the age of his second graders, a golf book by Tiger Woods, and other artifacts that highlighted the value he placed on learning and setting goals.

In October, John came to us with the book, *Elmer* (McKee, 1989) and asked us to help him develop word study and extension ideas for it. His children had really enjoyed the book and he wanted to capitalize on their interest to strengthen their literacy abilities. We planned how to pick a few words, have the children develop word families from them to enlarge their visual aptitude for using look-alike-words, such as Cunningham's (2000) "Using Words You Know" (p. 107) and set up the ""Guess the Covered Word" (Cunningham, 2000) activities to practice semantic, syntactical, and phonetic analysis. We also picked six words, wrote them on sentence strip sections, cut them apart, and showed John how to play "Word Sorts" (Cunningham, p. 73) which would help him work on having the students pay close attention to the elements in words. The following week, John met us eagerly drawing us into his classroom to see the words his children had written. He also added as he pointed to children's papers hung around the room,

> "Look at their spelling tests! They are doing amazingly well. I think the word activities helped, but I am also positive that the fact that they really like the books, even though we might only have one copy of the book, has caused them to do better. I always have the book out for them to read after I did and they argue to have it at their desks. What I am doing now is recording each book I use and putting it at the listening center for those who need and want to hear it more. Do you have any more African American literature?"

At the end of the school day, we went through the African American literature container with John. He chose the book *Nobody Owns the Sky* (Lindbergh, 1996) and *The Day Gogo Went to Vote: South Africa, April 1994* (Sisulu, 1996). We lent him the book, *Free to Dream: The Making of a Poet: Langston Hughes* (Osofsky, 1996).

When we arrived the following week, we could hear our names being called across the school campus as soon we walked from the parking lot. The other teachers standing around John smiled as he excitedly asked us to visit his room later during the day. His smiles and animated interactions were obvious to everyone that he meant what he said about enjoying his teaching.

We opened the door to his classroom at the scheduled time and the class quickly put away what they were working on, sat up straight in their desks, and looked at John. He said, "Are you ready?"

They replied loudly in unison, "Yes!" They then recited the last page from *Nobody Owns the Sky* (Lindbergh, 1996),

> Look above—see the dove, and the raven too,
> With the redbirds red and the bluebirds blue
> And the brown hawks circling, far and few,
> And the call of the swallows that follow the dew
> When the high wild geese come traveling through
> With the wind on their wings, flying free, flying true.
> You can call them all, you can say, "Hey, you!
> I'm coming up there, too!"

And they finished with, "Nobody owns the sky!" The class also performed this recitation during the assembly at the end of the day for the other students and parents.

John continued his literacy instruction using the African American literature we found for him. He was especially excited to borrow *Apt. 3* (Keats, 1971) because he said he had loved this book when he first began to read as it was similar to where he grew up. As this was a national election year, John took the book, *The Day Gogo Went to Vote* (Sisulu, 1996) and used it to launch into a study of voting with his students. He joined with Mike and together they brought in voting booths so the children could practice voting. They also had the children write to their parents urging them to vote. In addition, each class wrote chants for the top two contenders for the United States presidency.

When we met with John in December, 2000, he told us a special joy he felt coming from his evolving instruction, "I've had a number of parents stop by and tell me they are excited that their students are reading meaningful books. They said it makes them interested in school too."

Then, at the end of January 2001, John left a card in our mailbox at the Charter School. It read, "Thank you for helping me to become the progressive teacher I want to be."

Discussion

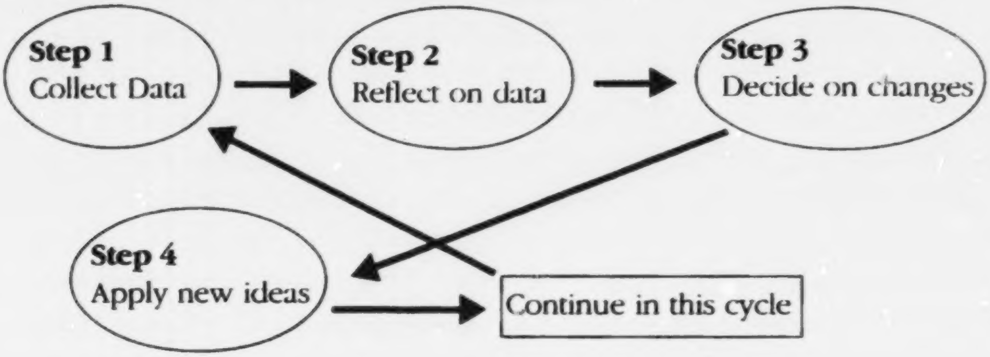
Collaborative action research requires a great deal of patience and willingness to take joy in minor changes. Even though the progress was limited, it was obvious that the teachers were much more willing to try transdisciplinary methods that incorporated interaction among students, use active learning that related to students' personal lives, and create variation in their instruction that could support greater student motivation to learn. The teachers resisted what they perceived as directives from the principal. We felt that the main reason for this was that they still harbored resentment about having had four different principals in the last three years. It may have also been that this last principal had been a graduate student from the university who had been assigned to the Charter School to work on parent involvement the year before. They perceived her as a colleague and when placed in an authoritarian role, the teachers resisted her suggestions. Based on the regular enthusiastic welcomes and hugs from the teachers and children, we felt that we had been readily accepted. We also feel that the gradual, respectful process we chose to use was a contributing factor toward the teachers' willingness to have us with them. They said they appreciated the fact that we were comfortable working with the children and modeling instructional strategies for them. Working with us allowed the element of support, yet choice, which they seemed to desire.

Although Liz, Mike, and John did make progress toward varying their instruction that would be more motivational for their students, we would have liked to see them make even more progress. The main thing we had to remember was to be patient supporters—flashbacks to how we had started kept us encouraged. We felt it was very important that we not pressure the teachers to do more than they were ready to do; they each had to find their own best path to transdisciplinary teaching. The teachers expressed that the support was critical and we felt that true collaboration was the key.

Limitations of the Study

The small sample is the greatest limitation of this study; however, smallness can reap the rewards of being able to better effect a result that might inform a larger population. Another limitation is the amount of time that could be devoted to the classrooms. The researchers were only able to be present in classrooms once a week at the most. The teachers voiced their frustration with that saying that they needed more support from the university. An additional limitation was the change in principals. There were three different principals during the time of this study. These changes contributed to teacher frustration, lack of willingness to participate, from a few, and a splintering of a vision for the school.

Carrying Out Responsive Action Research



Schmuck's (1997) idea was used to guide our expression of our process, yet we adapted his model with a "flashback" reflection. By using a flashback, we constantly referred back to the initial data that was collected during our constant comparative data collection. It can be difficult to see if anything has actually happened in such a continuous cycle of activity unless reflection also includes a check back to the initial data. John constantly reminded us of how his ideas had changed and gave us ongoing dialogue about why he made the choices he did.

Relationships Among Teachers at the School

The second and third grade teachers worked closely together, while the kindergarten and first grade teachers worked more independently. This was partly due to the fact that two of the second and third grade classes were upstairs all in closer proximity to each other than they were in the lower grade rooms. Also, the teachers of the upper grades preferred to work together and with us. John felt pressured by the roving special education teacher, who had been his supervising teacher the year before, to be more skills-based in his literacy program, yet he excitedly showed her what he was doing that he felt was promoting learning progress. The second grade teachers both depended on Mike to help them with discipline challenges. We felt that this reinforced Mike's concentration on control as he often had extra children sent from Liz or John's class in his room who were there for disciplinary purposes and may have prolonged his reluctance to become more student-learning centered.

Implications of the Study

Universities have an obligation, through their teacher education programs, to help teacher educators to be strong in their knowledge of learning and teaching. The usual "sink-or-swim" attitude of graduating teachers and allowing them to become overwhelmed by political pressures that may contradict what good literacy practices are cannot continue. Universities need to develop many different ways to provide supportive structures and mentoring relationships with teachers in schools. One way is for university researchers to collaborate with teachers in their classrooms (Glaser, Lieberman, & Anderson, 1997; Goodlad, 1990).

The nature of action research is that it is oriented toward a social justice perspective (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). The teachers who were hired to teach at the charter school were hired with the idea that they would be involved in working toward creating more equitable learning situations for students who have come from lives of poverty and the challenges with which that leaves them and their families. The teachers realized that some of the children may come to school with burdens that may interfere with their learning, yet they were united in the effort to provide a positive, calm, yet consistently fair, structured environment. They did a masterful job of this. In addition, the principal had a special knack for helping students deal with and overcome their emotional concerns. The children enjoyed a very welcoming school atmosphere. We also enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere and the opportunity to work with them collaboratively.

This research continues with the attempt to illuminate if the teachers are really committed to the mission of altering teaching to fit the students using diverse instructional methods or if the pressures that plague public schools bleed over to plague them also and restricts them from using effective transdisciplinary pedagogy. Because the researchers perceive this worry by the teachers, our work has been oriented toward convincing the teachers that they, in fact, are good teachers, who know their children, and can make good choices in curriculum development. The study will continue with the researchers working alongside the teachers to create the type of learning experiences that will serve to further advance literacy achievement.

References

American Heritage College Dictionary. (1993). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Charter School Annual Report. (2000). *School year annual report*. Self published.

Clay, M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties* (3rd ed.). Auckland, Australia: Heinemann.

Cooney, B. (1982). *Miss Rumphius*. New York, NY: Viking.

Creswell, J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cunningham, P. (2000). *Phonics they use: Words for reading and writing*. New York, NY: Longman.

Cunningham, P., Moore, S. A., Cunningham, J., & Moore, D. W. (2000). *Reading and writing in elementary classrooms: Strategies and observations*. New York, NY: Longman.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Fiske, E. (1991). *Smart schools, smart kids.* New Yourk, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Flinders, D. (1992). In search of ethical guidance: constructing a basis for dialogue. *Qualitative studies in education.* 5(2), 101-115.

Fullen, (1993). *Change Forces: Probing the depths of educational reform.* London: Falmer Press.

Gambrell, L., Morrow, L., Neuman, S., & Pressley, M., Eds. (1999). *Best practices in literacy instruction.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

George, J. C. (1992). *The missing gator of gumbo limbo: An ecological mystery.* New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Glaser, R., Lieberman, A., & Anderson, R. (1997). "The vision thing": Educational research and AERA in the 21st century, part 3: Perspectives on the research-practice relationship. *Educational researcher,* 7(26), 24-25.

Goodlad, J. (1990). *Teachers for our nation's schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Pub.

Goodman, K. (1998). *In defense of good teaching.* York, ME: Stenhouse Pub.

Greenfield, E. (1978). *Honey, I love: And other poems.* New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Greenwood, D., & Levin, M. (1998). *Introduction to action research: Social research for social change.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Pub.

Haberman, M. (1995). *Star teachers of children of poverty.* West Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Pi.

Harcourt Basal Textbooks. (1998). Orlando, FL, Harcourt School Publishers.

Keats, E.J. (1971). *Apt. 3.* New York, NY: Aladdin Books.

Kuykendall, C. (1992). *From rage to hope: Strategies for reclaiming black and hispanic students.* Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

Lauritzen, C., & Jaeger, M. (1994). Language arts teacher education within a transdisciplinary curriculum. *Language Arts,* 71, 581-587.

Lewin, K. (1948). *Resolving social conflicts.* New York, NY: Harpers.

Lindbergh, R. (1990). *Johnny Appleseed.* New York, NY: Little Brown.

Lindbergh, R. (1996). *Nobody owns the sky: the story of "Brave Bessie Colemen".* Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Lionni, L. (1963). *Swimmy.* New York, NY: Pantheon.

Lionni, L. (1967). *Frederick.* New York, NY: Knopf.

Lionni, L. (1969). *Alexander and the wind-up mouse.* New York, NY: Knopf.

Lionni, L. (1986). *It's mine!* New York, NY: Knopf.

Mahiri, J. (1998). *Shooting for excellence: African American and youth culture in new century schools.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

McKee, D. (1989). *Elmer.* New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard.

Morton, M. L., & Ochoa-Becker, A. (2000). Critical thinking and decision making throughout the curriculum: An integrated social studies unit. *Journal of the California Council for the Social Studies,* Summer.

Neisser, U., Boodoo, G., Bouchard, T. J., Boykin, A. W., Brody, N., Ceci, S. J., Halpern, D. F., Loehlin, J. C., Perloff, R., Sternberg, R. J., & Urbina, S. (1996). Intelligence: Knowns and unknowns. *American psychologist, 51,* 77-101.

Osofsky, A. (1996). *Free to dream: The making of a poet, Langston Hughes.* New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Pappas, C. C., Kiefer, B. Z., & Levstik, L. S. (1990). *An integrated language perspective in theelementary school*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Payne, R. (1998). *A framework for understanding poverty*. Baytown, TX: RFT Publishing.

Pressley, M., Allington, R., Wharton-McDonald, Block, C. C., & Morrow, L. (2001). *Learning to read: Lessons from exemplary first-grade classrooms*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Rickford, A. (2001). The effect of cultural congruence and higher order questioning on the reading enjoyment and comprehension of ethnic minority students. *Journal of education for students placed at risk*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., Inc.

Rigby Literacy Tree Readers. (1997). Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc.

Roberts, P. L., & Kellough, R. D. (2000). *A guide for developing interdisciplinary thematic units* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Ruddell, R. B. (1999). *Teaching children to read and write: Becoming an influential teacher* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Schmuck, R. (1997). *Practical action research for change*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight.

Sherman, A. (1994). *Wasting America's future: The Children's Defense Fund Report on the costs of child poverty*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Sisulu, E. B. (1996). *The day gogo went to vote: South Africa, April 1994*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company.

Stringer, E. (1996). *Action research: A handbook for practitioners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tchudi, S. (1994). *Integrated language arts in the elementary school*. Belmont, CA: Wadworth.

United States Census Bureau. (2000-2001). Current population survey: Poverty in the United States, 2000. Retrieved March 20,2001 from: http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/poverty/01poverty.htm.

Wolcott, H. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL AMERICA READS CHALLENGE TUTORING PROGRAM: LESSONS LEARNED

Rita M. Bean
Gregory H. Turner
Katy Belski

University of Pittsburgh

Abstract

In this paper, we provide a description of an America Reads Challenge tutoring program at a large urban university. The overview is followed by a discussion of four lessons learned that should provide useful information to those planning to implement such tutoring programs. The discussion includes information about the need for a strong training program and a common tutoring model, the need to garner support from various units at the university and sites, the importance of ongoing communication and a clear understanding of the program, and the need for an evaluation plan that provides for program improvement and accountability.

The America Reads Challenge Act, passed in 1998, provided opportunities for college students, retirees, and others, to respond to literacy problems faced by many of this country's children. The goal of the legislation was to support schools and families in teaching all children to read. One of the components of the Act was to recruit college students eligible for work-study funding to tutor elementary aged children. Numerous programs were implemented across this country and results of their efforts described (Fitzgerald, 2001; Morrow & Woo, 2001). Further, various manuals and procedures for implementing programs have been developed (Bader, 1998; Johnson, Juel, & Invernizzi, 1995).

Overall, the evidence indicates that individual tutoring can be effective in improving reading performance of those receiving such help, especially when tutors are well trained (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000; Juel, 1996; Shanahan, 1998; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). However, America Reads tutors tend to be inexperienced and to receive minimal training; therefore, there are concerns as to whether these tutors can effect change in the reading performance of children.

Recently, however, there have been several publications which indicate that minimally trained tutors can make a difference in the reading performance of children. Fitzgerald (2001) described a study investigating the impact of tutoring by college students involved in an America Reads initiative. First and second grade students who participated made significant gains in their instructional reading level that could be attributed to the tutoring. Baker, Gersten, & Keating (2000) described a volunteer tutoring program in which community volunteers were provided with brief training and given a broad framework from which to plan. Students in the experimental group made greater growth on several dimensions of reading as compared to students in the comparison group.

Although there is still a need for more research related to tutoring, not only whether it is effective, but what makes it effective, the current evidence indicates that tutoring by volunteers, such as college students participating in America Reads Challenge programs, can be a important source of support for struggling readers in schools. But what is essential for a successful program of tutoring, especially a large scale tutoring program operated by a university in cooperation with multiple sites? There is a need for specific information that can be useful to institutions wishing to implement such programs. What are the essential elements that need to be considered? What can be learned from those who have implemented such programs? In this paper, we provide a description of the America Reads program at one institution, and then discuss lessons learned, based upon four years of experience and ongoing evaluation of this program. The goal is to provide specific and practical ideas that have been useful to us in refining our program and making it more effective for both tutors and children.

Overview of America Reads

Program Structure

In 1997, the University's Office of Work Study asked the School of Education to assume responsibility for the America Reads program, including administrative and programmatic efforts. In that initial year, given the limited funds which provided only for payments to work-study students, a proposal was submitted to a local foundation to obtain monies for mentoring and training, supervisory support, and evaluation. With funds from this foundation, we were able to implement a large program, with 73 tutors who worked with approximately 200 children in 5 sites (1997-1998) (See Table 1). The program continued to grow; in 2000-01, there were 109 tutors who worked with approximately 500 children in 14 sites. Given the variability in sites, there were differences in how tutors functioned and in the degree of supervision and training available to University tutors at these various places. Specifically, the after school sites included two programs operated by churches and five that were directed by various community agencies. Although all of the America Reads programs in schools were in high poverty, low achievement schools, the ways in which the tutoring program functioned differed, depending upon the school.

Table 1. Growth of the America Reads Tutoring Program Between 1997-2001

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Change
No. of tutors	73	106	106	109	+36
Number of Children tutored	200	425	450	500	300
Sites:					
In-School	4	6	6	7	+3
After-School	1	1	4	7	+6
Total	5	7	10	14	+9

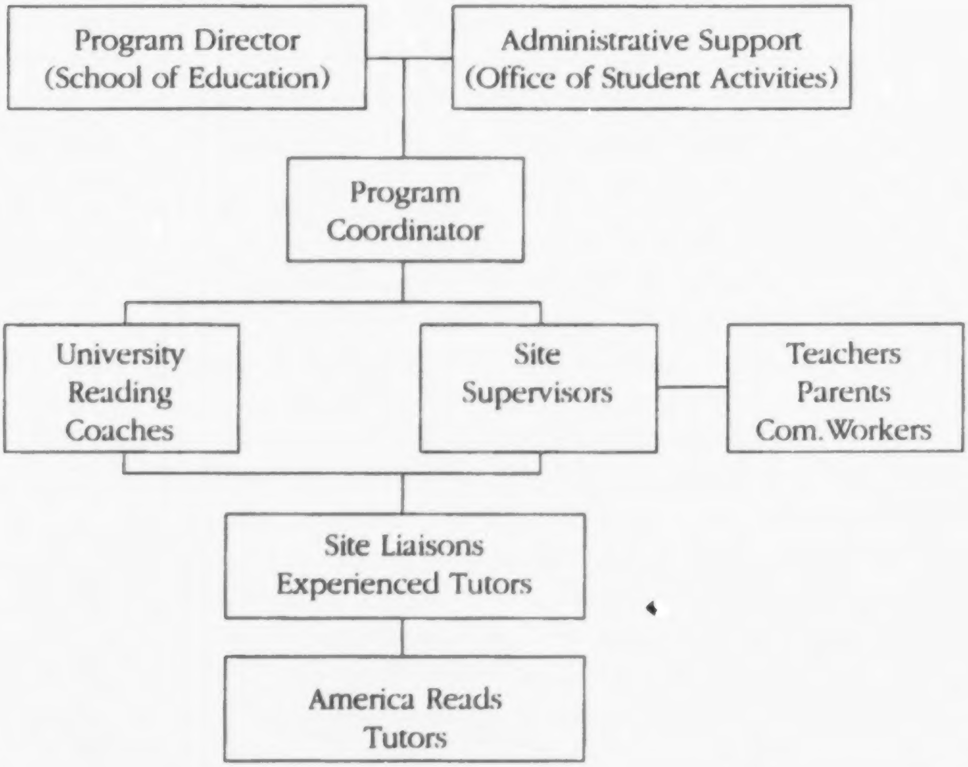
Description of Tutors

Tutors in this America Reads program are a diverse group. For example, in the year 2000-01, students represented the following disciplines and majors. The majority came from psychology (18.5%), engineering (9.2%), and business (9.2%). The remainder majored in the fields of history, nursing, pharmacy, political science, and languages. (The School of Education does not have an undergraduate teacher education program; therefore, there were no Education majors. However, 45% of the tutors wanted to gain experience working with children and 34.8% indicated the program experience was relevant to their career goals.) More than one-third of the tutors were between the ages of 18-19. Forty-two percent were freshmen; 31.8%, sophomores; 22.7%, juniors; and 3.0%, seniors. The tutors were predominantly female (72.7%). The majority were white, 75%; African-American, 19.7%; Native American, 1.5%; and Hispanic, 3%. The majority of tutors (75.8%) indicated that they had previous tutoring experience.

Description of Program Structure

The program is managed jointly by the School of Education and the Office of Volunteer Student Services. (See figure 1 for an overview of program structure). A faculty member in the School of Education, who contributes her time, serves as an advisor to the Program Coordinator relative to the substantive aspects of the program. At the same time, financial and administrative aspects of the program and recruitment (as well as transportation) are handled by the Office of Volunteer Student Services. The program is coordinated by an Americorps volunteer who works 40 hours a week, manages the program, places tutors, organizes the tutoring sessions, and provides direct support to tutors and site supervisors.

Figure 1. Program structure



With financial support from the School of Education, two reading coaches have been employed (each working 10 hours per week) to provide the mentoring and coaching support to the tutors. These graduate students have completed or are working towards reading specialist certification and have experience teaching struggling readers. Other graduate students with literacy training volunteer to make one or two presentations to tutors during the term.

The site supervisors, individuals at each of the sites who are our contact persons, are extremely important to the success of the program. Several of the supervisors are reading specialists in the schools, others are teachers, while several in the after school programs are directors of their programs. These supervisors manage the attendance records of tutors, provide site training, and are the direct contact between the university and the site. All site supervisors volunteer to work with America Reads tutors. For some, the responsibility is built into their schedule; for example, at one school, the reading specialist directs the tutoring of all volunteer tutors in the school, including the America Reads tutors, arranging schedules of students and providing feedback to teachers. The school has a large tutoring room with small work areas, a computer center, and many different materials available to tutors. At another site, a classroom teacher who has volunteered to handle this responsibility assigns tutors to children and meets with tutors informally after school or during her preparation time. All site supervisors attend the orientation meeting held at the beginning of the year, receive a procedural manual, and a set of guidelines about the program. They also meet on a regular basis with one tutor at their site designated as the site liaison.

The site liaisons are America Reads tutors with previous experience in the program. They are individuals who have worked well with children and with teachers at a site in previous years. They then assume leadership at a specific site, maintaining contact with their fellow tutors and with the site supervisor. They distribute written material to other tutors, disseminate information for the Program Coordinator, and provide feedback to the Coordinator about the site (identifying various problems or concerns as well as raising questions). They attend a meeting each month at the university during which they are provided with information that they then relay to the tutors at their specific site. We also keep in touch with these site liaisons via e-mail so that there is ongoing communication between the university and all of the sites. The site liaisons continue to tutor children but receive additional compensation for handling the leadership role at their site.

Description of Program Evaluation

The evaluation plan developed for the America Reads Program was designed to answer two questions: 1) What is the effect of the program on the reading achievement and reading attitudes of students who receive tutoring? and 2) What is the effect of the program on tutors themselves, e.g., in what ways do these experiences affect the undergraduates who serve as tutors? To answer the first question, we (a) collected test data as to student performance (to the extent possible), (b) used questionnaires to solicit feedback from site supervisors, classroom teachers, and tutors, and (c) asked students to complete attitude surveys. To answer the question about effect of this experience on the tutors themselves, tutors completed a questionnaire responding to questions about the program and what it meant to them (see Appendix A). In this questionnaire, tutors were also asked to indicate how they thought the program could be improved and whether we should return to the site the following year.

We also used the monthly meetings of tutors as a means of obtaining formative evaluation data. Tutors discussed what they were doing and raised concerns or questions that required us at times to make modifications in scheduling or to hold another training session, i.e., tutors were having difficulty managing the behavior of a small group of students and needed a session to address that concern.

Lessons Learned

In this section, we discuss four critical lessons that we learned from our experience with America Reads. We believe these notions are essential to any institution planning to develop a tutoring initiative with college students. They are based upon four years of implementation and the evaluation of the program, including surveys of tutors and site supervisors and results of working with children.

Lesson #1. The Training Program must be a Strong One that Includes Support from Both the University and the School or Agency Site.

As part of the training program, tutors must be given a structure to gain an understanding of how to help students improve their reading performance. As mentioned in the description of the evaluation plan, we asked tutors and site supervisors to provide feedback about their experiences. Tutors were always asking for more training, indicating that they needed more information about reading instruction, child development, and "discipline." Tutors at sites where there was a specific individual responsible for monitoring and supervising their work were much happier with their experiences and felt that they were successful in working with students. Based upon this feedback, we developed a tutoring framework around which training is based. We also added personnel to our staff so that there is more coaching and mentoring in the program. Each of these elements is discussed below.

Tutoring Framework. Given the variability in sites which included working one-on-one with a student, working with a teacher in the classroom, or assisting children with homework and other supplemental activities in after school sites, it was necessary to develop a model that provided for flexibility, at the same time that it provided a general framework for tutors. Tutors follow a plan that includes the following activities:

1. *Tutor reading to child.* The tutor reads to the child a fairy tale, story, short picture book, or chapter from a longer book. The purpose of this activity is for the tutor to engage in fluent reading, providing a model of good reading for the child.
2. *Guided reading at the child's grade level.* The tutor supports the

child in reading pages of a trade book basal story, or a favorite book. Tutors also discuss the selection with the child.

3. *Word study activities*. Tutors use games and other literacy related activities to help children practice spelling, phonics, and develop sight vocabulary.
4. *Writing*. Tutors work with children on writing meaningful sentences or stories to express observations, personal thoughts, or feelings.
5. *Motivation*. Throughout the previous four steps, tutors are encouraged to think of ways they can create enthusiasm and motivation for reading and writing. They are helped to understand the importance of active student engagement and of helping students see their own growth (charts, collection of words learned, etc.)

Tutors receive training that provides the rationale and activities for each of the steps of the framework. They also receive a Daily Tutoring Log (Figure 2) which they complete and submit to America Reads staff. The Log is a simple one, a modification of more complicated systems that were used in initial years of the program. Because of the variation in sites, tutors may modify their use of the framework since they are implementing a specific tutoring model used in a school or an after-school program. In some after school sites, tutors must first help students with their homework assignments before they use any of the steps in the tutoring framework described above.

Figure 2. Daily Tutoring Log

Tutor: ______________________ Site: ______________________

Student: A Grade: 1	Student: B Grade: 7
Date: __ / __ / __ Time: 3:00 to 4:00	Date: __ / __ / __ Time: 1:15 to 1:30
Tutoring: SFA ROtO	Tutoring: SFA ROtO
X Reading	X Reading
___ Discussion	___ Discussion
X Word/Sound Practice	___ Word/Sound Practice
___ Writing	___ Writing
___ Motivation	___ Motivation
Assignment or Notes: Very cooperative and focused! We worked on her homework (2 word searches), practiced reading her book, and then practiced her letters and compound sounds **(sh, cl, spl, etc.)**.	**Assignment or Notes:** We worked on a reading comprehension activity dealing with an article about jazz music history.
Behavior: 1 2 3 4 [✓ 5]	Behavior: 1 2 3 [✓ 4] 5
Skills: 1 2 3 [✓ 4] 5	Skills: 1 2 3 [✓ 4] 5

Figure 2 provides an example of a Daily Tutoring Log completed by a tutor working at an after school site. The tutor briefly described her work with two different students. She then circled the number that indicated how well the student behaved (scale of 1 = poor to 5 = excellent) and the level of success with the lesson (scale of 1 = not successful to 5 = very successful). The Daily Tutoring Log also has a place where tutors can indicate whether they are using one of the two tutoring models used most frequently in the schools with which we work: *SFA* or *Success for All* (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, & Wasik, 1996), or *ROtO, Tutor Manual: Reading One-To-One* (Farkas, Warren, & Johnson, 1999).

Training. Training is provided at the University and at the various sites, where it varies depending upon the format and tutoring model used. The university training modules, which have changed a great deal since Year 1 of the program, are described in Figure 3.

The first three sessions occur early in the trimester and are conducted with the entire group of tutors. In the first session, tutors are introduced to the program and provided with information about payroll and site requirements (dress code, attendance, etc.) They meet the site supervisors and have the opportunity to request one or more sites (based upon their class schedule and the location of the site). In the second session, the focus is on developing an understanding of reading development and instruction (What should be expected from children of various ages?) The standards provided in *Starting Out Right* (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999) are used as a general set of guidelines for these tutors, since most of them are working with primary aged students.

In the third session, again with the entire group, there are presentations by various graduate students and faculty that address each of the elements of the tutoring framework. In each of these presentations, tutors have opportunities for active participation in their own learning. For example, two graduate students may model a child reading to a teacher and discuss ways that the teacher can handle errors made by the child (What does the word look like? What makes sense here?) Tutors then work in pairs to practice this with each other. One of the important parts of this session is the discussion about behavior management and motivation. Tutors quickly become frustrated when they cannot gain the attention of a child with whom they are working.

These initial sessions have always been a part of our program; however, our experiences over the past four years have taught us that continuing and on-going support is critical to the success of the program. Thus, we have built a model that provides for monthly meetings and monitoring on site by university coaches. At the same time, each site is encouraged to provide its own supervision and instruction.

Figure 3. University Training Modules

Pre-Service Training		
Session 1	***Who?***	***Time Allotment***
• Logistics • Site Assignment • Job Description and Duties	large group	2 hours
Session 2		
• Children's reading development • General tutoring activities and guidelines	large group	3 hours
Session 3		
Instructional Strategies • reading to children • reading with children • reading by children • writing with children • behavior management and motivation	large group	3 hours
On-Going Training and Support		
Monthly Meetings		
• Feedback and reflection • Assessment	small groups	1 hour monthly
Monitoring on Site		
• Coaching	by site	bi-weekly site visits by Reading Coaches and Program Staff
Site Training		
• Tutoring models • Reading curriculum	by site	

The monthly feedback meetings are scheduled for different times during the day and evening to accommodate the tutors' schedules and to maintain a small number of tutors at each meeting. The meetings are led by the university coaches and are intended to address the tutors' questions and concerns. Common themes include how to help teachers and staff members at the tutoring sites to understand the mission and role of the tutor, how to motivate and manage the behavior of students, and how and where to find tutoring materials and plan for appropriate tutoring activities. The university coaches guide the conversation and provide feedback to the tutors, but the tutors themselves often exchange ideas and help each other solve problems. The tutors are in this way informally trained to use peer support at their tutoring sites, where direct guidance from university coaches is not always immediately available.

University coaches also have responsibility for several of the sites and they visit them on a bi-weekly basis. There they can observe tutors working with children and provide feedback. They also have the opportunity to talk with the site supervisor or with teachers who may have questions or concerns about the tutoring program.

As mentioned above, the tutoring framework and tutor training model have evolved over the past four years. We recognized the importance of having a tutoring framework to provide a common language and structure for all tutors. We also developed a training model that is sequenced and provides for ongoing support, very much needed by these inexperienced tutors.

Lesson #2. The Program Needs a Structure that Builds on the Strengths and Assets of Various Units of the University and the Community.

The America Reads program was housed in the School of Education initially. All aspects, financial, administrative, and content (tutoring models), were handled by a faculty member and several graduate students working with the program. Over the four years, we have learned the importance of working with other units of the university, not only because of the support that they provide, but because they have strengths that make the program even more effective.

The current arrangement in which the School of Education personnel work collaboratively with the Office of Volunteer Student Services (OVSS) has enabled us to recruit many more undergraduate tutors, given the access that OVSS has to undergraduate students. The interaction with OVSS has also enabled us to provide internship experiences for several undergraduate students on a short term, one or two trimester basis. Several interns have helped with the newsletter published each trimester; another worked in the evaluation of the program, interviewing teachers, tutors, and children.

The School of Education has established many different partnerships with various schools and community agencies; therefore, we are able to provide many different experiences for the tutors, accommodating their interests, schedules, and location preferences. This structure has evolved as we have struggled for ways to maintain contact with various sites and a large number of tutors. Indeed, this need for continuing and ongoing contact between the university and the various sites led to the following lesson learned.

Lesson #3. There is a Need for Communication and Clear Understanding of Program Goals Across All Sites.

Although we recognize the need for flexibility in the program, given the large number of tutors and sites, we also recognized the need for all personnel involved to have a clear understanding of the mission and goals of the program. For example, tutors were not at the sites to supervise recess duty or to substitute for a teacher who needed to make a telephone call. They were at the site to provide additional support to children as a means of improving reading performance.

The Program Coordinator developed a letter with various stipulations of the program that is sent to the site supervisors for their signatures, before the start of the school year. In this way, we were able to clearly state the responsibilities of the sites, the university and the tutors, and we could anticipate and resolve misunderstandings before the tutors were placed at the site. This written information has also helped us by providing a "paper trail" whenever various issues are raised during the school year after the tutors have been placed.

In addition, we developed a two-page "Guide to Working with America Reads Tutors" and distributed it to all teachers or staff members who work with America Reads tutors. The guide contains basic information about what tutors are permitted and not permitted to do, when the tutors will be coming to the site, and how to handle problems with the tutors. The guide is updated and distributed periodically.

The tutors receive a *Tutor Handbook*, which contains more detailed information about the program history and mission, a description of the tutoring model, sample activities, and a list of resources. Site supervisors also receive the *Tutor Handbook*, so that they know what information the tutors have received. We also have a website (www.pitt.edu/~amreads) that can be accessed by all in the program. In addition, much communication occurs via e-mail between project coordinator and tutors.

Lesson #4. There is a Need for an Ongoing Evaluation Plan that Provides for Program Improvement and Accountability.

Throughout the four years, we have documented our efforts in the America Reads program, obtaining information about the children (who they are) and the number of hours of tutoring they receive. We have also obtained feedback from children and from tutors that has enabled us to make changes in the program. Our most difficult task has been to obtain systematic documentation of the achievement results of students, given the variability in sites. We have, each year, looked at achievement data at various sites where achievement data are available (most often the school based sites). These results are very favorable and have been acknowledged in the yearly reports to the foundation (Turner, Belski, & Bean, 2001). In Appendix B we include examples of data from two of the sites in which we were able to compare children who were tutored with children who were not tutored, but reading at approximately the same levels at the beginning of the year.

Also, as part of the evaluation, tutors and site liaisons asked children to express their views about the tutoring. Sixty seven percent of the children indicated that they were more interested in reading and 80 per cent believe that they were better readers because of the tutoring. All children (100 percent) had a positive perception of their tutors, describing them with words like smart, nice, funny, kind.

However, we have developed and are using for the first time a set of measures that were developed specifically for the America Reads Program. These measures, developed by the reading coaches with feedback from project Coordinator and Project Director, were presented to the tutors who were trained to administer them to all children in the program (at the beginning of the program and again at the end). The instruments assess performance in the following areas: phonemic awareness, print concepts, letter knowledge, ability to pronounce sight and pseudo words, writing, and attitude toward reading. We expect that these instruments will provide us with the systematic data we need for program accountability. We anticipate analyzing the data in several ways, including the changes in students who received intensive tutoring (more hours) versus those who had less intensive tutoring.

Summary

As one looks at the research regarding tutoring and its effects, it is obvious that there are many elements that can affect the results. These include many factors, from the expertise of the tutors, the training they receive, to site based factors (less opportunity to really affect student reading performance). Given that we have had the opportunity to work with America Reads for a four year period, we have been able to make adjustments and to learn from our work. The lessons we have learned—the need for strong training and a common tutoring model, the need to garner support from various units at the university and sites, the importance of ongoing communication and clear understanding of the program, and the need for an evaluation plan that provides for program improvement and accountability—are ones that we believe can be helpful to all those interested in implementing large scale tutoring programs between university and various sites.

References

Bader, L. A. (1998). *Read to succeed: Literacy tutor's manual.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Baker, S., Gersten, R., & Keating, T. (October, November, December, 2000). When less may be more: A 2-year longitudinal evaluation of a volunteer tutoring program requiring minimal training. *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*(4), 494-519.

Burns, M. S., Griffin, P., & Snow, C. E. (1999). *Starting Out Right. A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Elbaun, B., Vaughn, S., Hughes, & Moody (2000). How effective are one-to-one tutoring programs in reading for elementary students at risk for reading failure? A meta-analysis of the intervention research. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92* (4), 605-619.

Farkas, G., Warren, M., & Johnson, A. (July, 1999). *Tutor Manual: Reading One-To-One.* Center for Education and Social Policy, School of Social Sciences, the University of Texas at Dallas.

Fitzgerald, Jill (January/February/March, 2001). Can minimally trained college student volunteers help young at-risk children to read better? *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(1), 28-47.

Johnston, F., Juel, C., & Invernizzi, M. (1995). *Guidelines for Volunteer Tutors of Emergent and Early Readers*. Charlottesvile, VA: University of Virginia.

Juel, C. (July/August/September 1996). What makes literacy tutoring effective? *Reading Research Quarterly, 31*(3), 268-289.

Morrow, L. M., & Woo, D. G. (2000). *Tutoring Programs for Struggling Readers: The America Reads Challenge.* New York: Guilford Press.

Shanahan, T. (1998). On the effectiveness and limitations of tutoring in reading. In P.D. Pearson & A. Iran-Nejad (Eds.), *Review of Research in Education 23,* Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, pp. 217-234.

Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Dolan, L. J., & Wasik, B. (1996). *Every Child Every School Success For All.* California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Turner, G., Belski, K., & Bean, R. M. (September, 2001). *The America Reads Tutoring Program.* Final Evaluation Report, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Wasik, B. A., & Slavin, R. E. (1993). Preventing early reading failure with one-to-one tutoring: A review of five programs. *Reading Research Quarterly, 28,* 178-200.

Appendix A. University Of Pittsburgh: America Reads Tutor Survey

Instructions For Survey Completion

Dear America Reads Tutor:

This survey is to learn about your background, observations, opinions, and experiences during the American Reads program. The information you provide will be used to improve our understanding of the program as it's currently designed and implemented.

Do Not write your name on this survey. The questions about your background will only be used to describe the types of students participating in the America Reads program and completing this questionnaire.

The answers you give us will be kept confidential. No names will be identified in the report of results; only summaries will be reported. Answer the questions based on what you really do in your tutoring work, your experiences, and what you think.

It is vital that that you complete and return this survey. To ensure that you receive your last check, when you are finished answering the following questions, please put the survey in an envelope with your name legibly written on the back, and return it to the America Reads Office.

Demographic Information

Name of Site you are tutoring at ______________________

Your age ______________

Your Gender (Please check the appropriate box): ☐ Female ☐ Male

Your racial/ethnic background ______________________

Your year in college (Please check the appropriate box from the list below):
☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior ☐ Graduate Student

What is your major? ______________________

What is your minor? ______________________

What is your QPA? ______________________

The survey begins on the following page.
Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation!

Please read each question carefully. For each item, ***circle the number*** from the choices listed below that best reflects your response:

1=None at all; 2=Somewhat; 3=Moderately; 4=A great deal

1. Prior to participating in the America Reads program, how much tutoring experience did you have?

   1 2 3 4

2. To what extent have noted improvement in reading ability of the children you tutor?

   1 2 3 4

3. To what extent have you noted a positive change in attitude towards reading in the children you tutor?

   1 2 3 4

4. How much satisfaction do you get from your work as a tutor?
1 2 3 4

5. How much time do you spend preparing for your tutoring sessions?
1 2 3 4

6. In the following areas please tells how you use your preparation time?
a. Preparing materials
1 2 3 4
b. Planning lessons
1 2 3 4
c. Other (Please specify) ______
1 2 3 4

7. Approximately how many hours *each* week do you tutor? Please circle your tutoring time from the list provided below.
1-5 hours 5-10 hours 10-20 hours

8. How much do you feel that you understand the America Reads' program goals?
1 2 3 4

9. How much support do you get in carrying out your role?
1 2 3 4

10. From whom and to what extent do you receive most of your support?
a. America Reads Staff
1 2 3 4
b. Site Supervisor
1 2 3 4
c. Other individual (please identify this person's title/role then circle the extent of support you receive) ______
1 2 3 4

11. How much feedback do you get concerning tutoring?
1 2 3 4

12. From whom do you receive most of your feedback?
1 2 3 4
a. America Reads Staff
1 2 3 4
b. Site Supervisor
1 2 3 4
c. Other (Please specify this person's role then circle the extent of feedback provided)
1 2 3 4

13. How successful do you feel you are as a tutor?
1 2 3 4

14. How confident are you in your tutoring ability?
1 2 3 4

15. How much effect has tutoring had on your thinking about becoming a teacher?
1 2 3 4

16. What is the likelihood that you would tutor if you were not getting paid?
1 2 3 4

17. In your tutoring sessions, how much time do you spend on the following activities
    a. Reading outloud to the student
    1 2 3 4
    b. Having the student read to
    1 2 3 4
    c. Practicing reading skills
    1 2 3 4
    d. Writing
    1 2 3 4
18. How much did each of the following influence your decision to become an America Reads tutor:
    a. Getting a job
    1 2 3 4
    b. Getting experience in working with children
    1 2 3 4
    c. Helping others
    1 2 3 4
    d. Relevance to my career goals
    1 2 3 4
19. How well prepared did you feel to provide tutoring to your students?
    ☐ Well prepared ☐ Needed some training ☐ Needed a lot of training
20. Did you need training in a specific area?
    ☐ No ☐ Yes, please specify ____________________
21. Did you need help to solve specific problems?
    ☐ No ☐ Yes, please specify ____________________
22. *Overall*, how satisfied are you with the experiences you have had with the America Reads program?
    ☐ Not satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied
23. Would you recommend this program to other students?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please tell us the reason(s) for your response above

1. What were the *2 or 3 most important lessons* you learned from your America Reads program experince? ____________________
   ____
2. What did you like *most* about being a tutor? ____________________
   ____
3. What did you like *least* about being a tutor? ____________________
   ____
4. What things did you learn from this experience that you would not have learned in the classroom? ____________________
   ____
5. What things did you learn in class that you think you understand better because of your America Reads experience? ____________________
   ____

6. In what ways did the America Reads experience change the way you think about children and literacy development? ______________________

7. Are there ways you think this experience could be improved or strengthened to benefit other students entering or continuing in the program? Please tell us what they are: ______________________

8. Is there anything else about your America Reads program experience that you would like to tell us? ______________________

We Greatly Appreciate Your Time And Consideration In Completing This Survey.

Thank You!

Copyright, © 2002, by the University of Pittsburgh

Appendix B

Example 1.
America Reads: Kindergarten

	Below Basic and Basic (%)		Proficiency and Advanced (%)		N
	Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	
Phonemic-Awareness					
with tutor	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	18
without tutor	100.0	45.5	0.0	54.5	21
Letter & Sound					
with tutor	100.0	28.6	0.0	71.4	18
without tutor	100.0	36.4	0.0	63.6	21
Comprehension					
with tutor	72.7	0.0	27.3	100.0	18
without tutor	100.0	81.8	0.0	18.2	21
Writing					
with tutor	100.0	14.3	0.0	85.7	18
without tutor	100.0	81.8	0.0	18.2	21

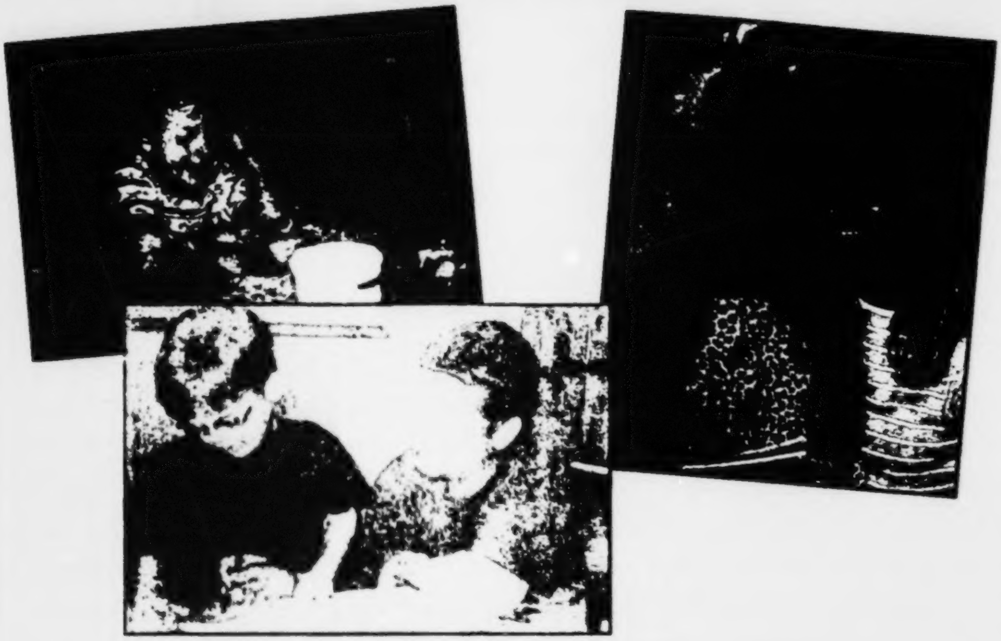
We were able to compare the performance of 21 kindergarten students (11 tutored over the entire school year and 10 who were not tutored, but who were considered to be low achieving readers similar to those who received tutoring) in one public elementary school. At baseline, there were no significant differences between the two groups; however, by the spring testing, there were major differences in the percentage of students receiving tutoring who scored at the proficient or advanced levels as compared to the students who did not receive tutoring.

Example 2.

Grade 2
(Tutored (T) n=14 Not Tutored (NT) n=25)

Test	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Difference	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Difference
	T	**T**	**T**	**NT**	**NT**	**NT**
Decoding (pseudo words)	8.1	15.6	+ 7.5	11.0	17.6	+ 6.6
Sight Word Recognition	16.0	112.7	+96.7	17.5	75.4	+57.9
Writing Sample	14.9	19.0	+ 4.1	14.9	14.9	0
Comprehension	71.7	82.9	+11.2	71.5	88.3	+16.8

We compared the performance of Grade 2 students (14 who were tutored with 25 who did not receive tutoring). Even though students who were tutored began the program with a lower mean score on the sight word test and with the same score on the writing test, their post test mean scores were higher on those two measures. Students who received tutoring also made substantial gains on the decoding and comprehension measures.



THE FACES OF DIVERSE LITERACIES

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LITERACY POSSIBILITIES AND CONCERNS FOR MEXICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: READERS, WRITERS, AND PUBLISHERS RESPOND

Janelle B. Mathis, Ph.D.

University of North Texas

Abstract

At a time when multiethnic children's literature can play a significant and complex role in the creation of culturally relevant learning environments for our rapidly growing Mexican-American population, are we faced with a shortage of authentic literature to fill this role? A study with young bilingual learners points to the potential significance of the role of culturally relevant Hispanic children's literature and leads to concerns about the availability of this literature. What are the responses of publishers, scholars, and educators to this situation?

With a belief in the significance of culturally relevant children's literature in English language acquisition, I began an inquiry that focused on young bilingual readers' response to culturally relevant children's literature and the strategies they used to comprehend text. The focus of this manuscript is on the findings and implications of this descriptive study that elicited concerns about the limited resources available and gave impetus to the extended inquiry into the voices of publisher and scholars regarding this need. These implications contribute support to the need for authentic culturally relevant literature.

Creating a Framework for Inquiry

The past decade has been a period of unprecedented growth of the Latino population in the United States, the largest proportion of which is Mexican in origin (Garcia, 2000). Current projections of the U. S. Census Bureau, 2000, indicate that in 2020 Hispanics will represent 17% of the population (Garcia, 2000). In the 1995 Texas census, more than 28 percent of the population was Hispanic, and in 1996 Hispanic school children made up more than 36.7 percent of the school population (Izquierdo, Ligons, & Erwin, 1998). As the demographics of United States schools constantly change reflecting the diversity of cultures and ethnicities within society, educators are confronted with increasing demands to consider many aspects of culturally relevant instruction and how to adopt and adapt new instructional strategies to nurture literacy growth in all children.

The notion of culturally responsive instruction, "instruction consistent with the values of students' own cultures and aimed at improving academic learning" (Au, 1993, p. 130), as used here is also inclusive of the notion that instructional decisions should be learner-centered and based on a knowledge of the learner's background (Guild, 1994). Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that when using knowledge of a student's background to support instruction, teachers must consider the student's experiences as legitimate knowledge. This is supported by the transactional theory of reader response (Rosenblatt, 1938/95, 1978) and theoretical frames of multicultural literacies (Barrera, 1992; Gee, 1990) both framing this inquiry. Reader response theory lays the foundation for all readers by saying that reading is a transaction between the reader and the text and unique to each individual. It is a lived through experience, and Galda and Cullinan (2002) state that . . . "The cultural values that permeate a text will trigger varying responses in culturally diverse readers" (p. 308). Multicultural literacy theorists believe that literacy learning and teaching are both culturally mediated and ideologically constructed. Issues of power and knowledge and social justice are often at the forefront of this paradigm of thought (Garcia & Willis, 2001).

A major resource for developing sound literacy strategies that acknowledge the home culture of students is multicultural and multiethnic children's literature (Au, 1993; Harris, 1997). Nieto (1999) has consistently emphasized that students of all backgrounds, languages, and experiences need to be acknowledged, valued and used as important sources of their education. The need for children to see themselves reflected in the literature they read is vital to their understanding, motivation, and enjoyment of reading (Bishop, 1997). For students who are ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, understandings which they can make during reading through their cultural connections support the semantic system in learning to read. These connections help to assure that they can use prior knowledge and context clues as they decode words (Freeman & Freeman, 1994; NRCIM, 1998; Truscott & Watts-Taffe, 1998). Additionally, such books help children develop feelings of self-worth, a necessary component in any learning environment, and contribute to motivation to learn by providing aesthetic experiences with texts.

The body of literature representing the four major non-mainstream ethnic groups in the United States was stated in the early 1990's as being less than 10% of all children's books published (Reimer, 1992). Mexican-American children's literature from the late 1980's through the 1990's has had a slow but steady growth. Barrera, Quiroa, and West-Williams (1999) in discussing Mexican-American children's literature, state "The number of books produced annually is still only approximately half of a percent (.5%) of the total number of children's books published annually in the United States" (p. 316). Hispanic children's books have slowly decreased from 88 in 1997 to 42 in 2000. Citing the Cooperative Children's Book Center's records, Anderson (2002) states that only 42 of the approximately 5,250 children's books published in 2000 were about Latinos and less than half of those were by Latino authors and illustrators. Despite the call for multicultural resources and changing demographics, the Hispanic experience is not proportionately represented in children's literature.

As with books representing other under-represented ethnic groups, there are significant titles and authors of Mexican-American children's literature that have only come into existence during the past decade. However, many of the stories and voices of the Mexican-American community remain to be heard. Why, over the last decade, has awareness of changing demographics not brought forth new Mexican-American writers, eager to tell their stories?

According to Jiminez and Barrera (2000), "A half century after George Sanchez's (1940) prescient call for linguistically and culturally relevant materials for Mexican-origin students, we would like to see such materials/books, both textbooks and trade books, as well as computer software, become widely and readily available. At present, bilingual teachers must spend a great deal of time searching for materials, mediating their inadequacies, and adapting them so that their students can comprehend their intent" (p. 523).

Over fifty years after Sanchez's call, author Pat Mora (1998) addresses the need for Latino writers for children in the statement, "I tell all new writers and illustrators of color of all ages how much their voices and stories are needed, as I know how difficult their journey will be . . . I remember being told that if Latinos had submitted anything worthy of being published, it would have been" (p. 285). It is of no surprise that potential authors and illustrators are hesitant to share their stories. Statements like this support my own discovery of the lack of culturally relevant books for children to read.

Creating the Context for Inquiry

The context for this inquiry is that of a second grade bilingual elementary school in the Southwest. Ten of the 15 children in this class had been in this school since beginning kindergarten and came from homes where Spanish was the predominant language. The others had been in the United States a year or less. I met with each of four groups for 45 minutes, three days a week during a nine-week period. Each quarter I worked with a different group of 3 or 4 students, selected by the teacher, who were receiving instruction in both English and Spanish within their class. The teacher, who decided each quarter the students who would be the "reading buddies," stated that she appointed the groups so that each would have a variety of levels of proficiency in English use. The tutoring sessions were planned to include reading, responding, some writing, and engagements that would deepen the readers' involvement with text such as readers theater, choral reading, vocabulary games, making simple puppets, and creating their own books. The instructional strategies I employed involved activating prior knowledge, writing, viewing, visually representing, vocabulary strategies, and the use of various forms of both Spanish and English in reading and discussion. The context seemed to be one of collaboration, clear communication, and positive expectations. This is in keeping with the effective practices of literacy instruction as identified by Truscott and Watts-Taffe (1998). We read individually and together, supported by both shared and guided reading strategies. I chose the first group with whom I worked as the one to describe because since it was the beginning of the second grade, they had not yet benefited from that year's instruction. Also, the data showed this group to be more excited about this extra reading time, a factor that well might relate to the beginning of school. Also, our meeting times were less interrupted by the various school activities throughout the year.

Initially, the literature used represented authors such as Gary Soto, Pat Mora, and George Ancona. I also continuously examined numerous professional resources as well as local book stores to discover what other culturally relevant Mexican-American books might be available. I contacted several small press distributors in the Southwest in my quest for books that were culturally relevant, appealed to young children, and would be within their "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978) as we began our work together. I desired books that included the Spanish language—both dual texts as well as interlingual uses of Spanish where selected Spanish words and phrases are used within English text (Barrera & de Cortes, 1997). The titles shared in the following discussion of the study are ones to which student response was significant. Other titles were used to vary reading, although a major issue became finding resources that met my criteria—an issue so compelling that it extended this inquiry.

Examining the Data

The sessions were audio-taped and transcribed. Likewise, I kept a journal of interesting occurrences and my own reflections/responses as well as student written artifacts to support my understandings. In keeping with the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), I searched these multiple data forms for categories around which to organize my findings. I further defined these categories by identifying and coding key words, phrases, or events that fit within each question/category and continuously compared them with others in the same or different categories. I then examined the categories to identify which particular words, events or discussions were generated because of the culturally relevant content of the literature. The categories that emerged identifying culturally relevant connections were as follows:

1. Discussions elicited from text
2. Discussion elicited from illustrations
3. Understandings from comparing vocabulary in two languages
4. Confidence in participating in literacy activities

I correlated the findings of the sessions with my own understandings and those of scholars in the field. I also sought insights from the classroom teacher as a means of triangulating of my findings.

Reflecting on the Readers

As a result of the many response-based activities (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 1997; Galda & Cullinan, 2002; Galda, Rayburn, & Stanza, 2000), the perceptions I developed of each of the three readers were framed within the interactions of our sessions together. The following brief summaries of their personalities are based on my observations and notes collected during the sessions and are shared here to help create a context for the following description of their responses to the books that supported the categories previously described. (The names are pseudonyms.)

Rosie

Rosie was a confident speaker of both English and Spanish. A thoughtful child, I could tell she was contemplating a situation and problem solving when she took on a mysterious demeanor and became momentarily quiet. She planned how we would read, carry out readers theater, and how other activities should be implemented. As she read, Rosie used semantics and context as well as the phonological system. When sounding out a word, she paused to consider if it really was a word—something the others did not yet do. She found words intriguing and wanted to "collect" as many as she could on the post-it notes provided. *Magda's Tortillas* (Chevarria-Chavez, 2000), a bilingual text about a young girl whose grandmother teaches her to make tortillas, was Rosie's favorite book during the sessions.

Sandy

Sandy's voice was as tiny as her petite frame. She worked diligently on reading with a very serious attitude. Even when a text was seemingly too hard, such as *Chato's Kitchen* (Soto, 1995), she wanted to complete it. She had such a strong phonetic focus on the letters in each word that when she was reading a Spanish word, she did not realize it was Spanish until it was brought to her attention. She loved to draw tiny pictures when she could not communicate a word and was greatly excited by trying to act out words to explain them. One strong connection to a story was the text *Let's Eat* (Zamorano, 1996) because the family in the story has a new baby. This book opened many opportunities for her to extend her use of English as she kept the group current on her new family member. Set in Spain, this book was chosen because of its use of Spanish phrases and names at an appropriate reading level. However, this did not necessarily represent a culturally relevant book. Sandy also was happy to see the piñata making process in George Ancona's *The Piñata Maker* (1994) as her aunt made piñatas at home.

Ricardo

Quiet and often dependent on Rosie to translate, Ricardo hesitatingly approached the decoding of words. He seemed unaware of strategies such as using illustration as a source of word meanings. Once we had talked about the connection between the pictures and the text and that it was helpful to use the illustrations, he would physically try to show he was using the strategy by exaggerating his search for pictures. When the group read aloud together, he would sometimes get distracted and continue mumbling made-up words to the rhythm that the group had set even though he was not aware of exactly what we were reading. He greatly enjoyed the vocabulary games and acting out the meanings of both English and Spanish words. When using *The Piñata Maker*, a book with both English and Spanish text, Ricardo would count lines down and words across in hopes of finding the Spanish word that correlated with the English text. He also took the lead in discussion when pictures in this book focused on scenes from Mexico as family members lived there.

Reflecting on the Use of Culturally Relevant Texts

The following discussion is organized around the categories that emerged from data analysis. These categories reflect the role of culturally relevant books for these readers and include short passages from extended discussions that occurred.

Discussion/Learning Elicited from Text

While the culturally relevant books selected were not necessarily always books the children would have self-selected, they were involved in the selections and interest sparked when they recognized something familiar. As we read *Magda's Tortillas* together, the amount of text was at times overwhelming as indicated by their expressions and short exclamations as they took turns reading. But interest was keen as we focused on the relationships described in the text between Magda and her grandmother.

> Sandy: My abuela says—me llama ese también, "mi hijita."[My grandmother calls me that too "mi hijita."]
>
> Rosie: Grandmothers always want you to be happy. That's why she tried to make Magda feel so special about her tortillas.
>
> Ricardo: She wants Magda to be happy y no quiere ofenderle [and not hurt her feelings].

The description of the various shapes of Magda's tortillas reflected different aspects such as the Christmas star or the lakes where the grandmother had lived in Mexico.

> Ricardo: Mi grandmother, abuela, vive cerca de us lago en Mexico tambien. [My grandmother lives near a lake in Mexico, too.] The same one where I lived. We swim and swim.

Likewise, a description of the *merienda*, afternoon birthday party, elicited discussion.

> Rosie: I'm going to have a birthday party soon and I know my mother will make tortillas. But I don't think we will have shapes. She makes round ones but I don't help her.
>
> Sandy: I had a birthday but not a *merienda*. We had cake and piñata and songs all day on Saturday.
>
> Ricardo: My cousins who are here come to my birthday but not the ones in Mexico. One time all my cousins come.
>
> Sandy: Oh, look, la estrella de Navidad. [the Christmas star)]
>
> Ricardo: My cousins come sometimes for navidad—so many people.

All three children excitedly described their connections to the many shapes, and family stories were woven throughout the discussions/stories of grandparents, Christmas celebrations, birthday parties, and houses crowded with company. These various topics opened doors for expressive oral language use and collaborative vocabulary building.

Tomás and the Library Lady not only elicited discussions about friends and family members who travel around to work, but these young readers were also quite interested in the fact that Tomás Rivera was a real person. A school in their community is named for him and the discussion included who he was and what he did to deserve such an honor. This was the first time that each student had heard of Rivera, the person. *Tomás and the Library Lady* (Mora, 1997) while containing proportionately much text, was written in such a way that the vocabulary and syntax were not difficult for these second-graders to follow. Their fluency improved as they could predict the sentence structure of the sentences they were reading.

Discussion/Learning Elicited from Illustration

An excellent example of the significance of illustration in culturally relevant text was found during our reading of *The Piñata Maker* (1994). While I hesitated to use this book because of the detailed description of creating piñatas, the illustrations helped to draw the young readers into the text and create a desire to know more about the story. They recognized and were fascinated by some of the masks and piñatas shown at the beginning and began describing some similar sights from their experiences both in Mexico and in the United States.

> Rosie: Ohhh, look at the swan. I wonder if he makes butterfly piñatas? Like Magda made butterfly tortillas!
>
> Sandy: I want a stick—Me gustaría tener un palo para golpearlo muy fuerte y sacar todas las dulces. [I would like a stick to hit it hard and get all the candy out.]
>
> Ricardo: Those puppets—the ones de sus cabezas. [the ones on their heads] I go to my abuela and hay un desfile y [we have a parade with] puppets just like that. My brother was a puppet en el desfile but I was little.
>
> Sandy: My tía makes those (pointing to the picture of piñatas) but she has cosas diferentes. [different things] She usa cosas de su cocina. [She uses things in her kitchen.]
>
> Ricardo: Mi abuelo tells his stories about the piñatas, sobre los animales y gente que son. [about the animals and people they are].

As they described the process to include the materials, Sandy eagerly contributed her knowledge of creating piñatas from watching her aunt do so in her home. Of course, each child related a birthday or event where the piñata created much excitement. The picture of the celebrations in Ancona's book received much attention and discussion. *Family Pictures* (Garza, 1990) also provided intriguing illustrations around familiar events that led to much discussion and many questions concerning such topics as a local festival, a cake walk, and picking fruit.

Understandings from Comparing Vocabulary in Two Languages

Vocabulary games were a positive aspect of the tutoring sessions and cultural connections often were the source of extended vocabulary learning.

Likewise, "paired" books—using books together that build on a particular concept or further develop an idea through comparison or contrast—helped readers understand vocabulary concepts. When we read *Tomás and the Library Lady*, Ricardo was intrigued with the word *imagination*.

> Ricardo: What is this? (pointing to the word imagination) The word you just said?
>
> Rosie: Imagination. When Tomás's grandfather told him stories he could see the story in his mind. He could think about interesting and strange and scarey things. Imaginación es contar historieas. Imaginación es escuchar. [Imagination is telling stories. Imagination is listening.]
>
> Ricardo: [speaking more directly to Rosie] Imaginación. Creo que mid abuelo tiene imaginación también porque cuenta historias. I think el abuelo cuenta las historias . El quiere ver si el niño tiene imaginacion. [Imagination. I think my grandfather has imagination also because he tells stories. I think the grandfather wants him to tell stories. He wants to see if the boy has imagination.]

He understood well that Tomás was experiencing many exciting things through his imagination as he began to read. To reinforce this word, I shared the book, *The Extraordinary Gift* (Langlois, 1996), a story about a young boy who receives many fantastic gifts by being given a book. The fold-out pages pointed to the unexpected possibilities in a book and supported the idea of what Tomas was discovering in his reading. Ricardo asked several times to read this book.

Additionally, we selected words we thought were important in the stories—both Spanish and English. After putting the words on cards and mixing the cards, we drew cards one at a time and defined the words either through English use or acting the word. Some of the words chosen the initial time we played this were: los dioses trabalenguas, qué pena, imagination, pájaro, en un tiempo pasado, dinosaur, hug, harina, lindos, chiquitos, rolling pin, geometry, los lagos, bolita, cakewalk, oranges, basket, and fair.

Confidence in Participating in Literacy Activities

An increase in confidence of these readers became evident as the sessions progressed. Readers theater presentations were full of energy, the use of both languages, and obvious pleasure—to the point that they asked to present the readers theater to the rest of their class. At the end of the tutoring period, each child was given a book to keep and most often it was a book around which we had participated in an extended engagement. Ricardo even wanted his book to be in Spanish so his mother could share with him the reading and activities.

Each added to their personal strategies—both semantic and context related—to use in nurturing English reading abilities, but in all cases, the interdependence of the six modes of language arts was evident. That is, reading, writing, speaking, and listening, viewing and visually representing made up the various engagements that extended reading of the text. As mentioned earlier, numerous extensions of reading were used to further internalize concepts and words. The children discussed feelings of the characters, as in *Chato's Kitchen*, *Too Many Tamales*, and *Magda's Tortillas*. While I wanted these readers to experience the excellent use of words and descriptions by some of these authors, I also wanted them to feel successful as readers. The reading buddies found the books I brought to class interesting and wanted to read them; however, of the limited number of books obtained that related to the Mexican American experience, few were at an independent reading level for these children.

Chato's Kitchen (Soto, 1995), for example, is one book we explored. Many adults and young people have delighted at the story of the two cats who scheme to have a new family of mice for dinner—literally. While the language is quite descriptive and captures the personality of the cats from the Barrio, the imagery often presented problems for their comprehension. For example, when Chato, a cat, sees the mice, "He felt the twinge of mambo in his hips." The mice are invited to dinner at the home of Chato, and they ask to bring a friend who is a dog. "Soon Chorizo arrived, and the mice danced in the shadow of their long, skinny, low-riding friend." However, the intriguing illustrations beckoned the readers to explore this story further. After a shared reading of the book with many explanations and acting out of words, such as *slinking*, *mambo*, and *low-riding*, I decided to create a readers' theater using syntax and vocabulary that was more direct and would present a successful independent reading of this story. My goal was that they experience the rich authentic language Soto had used but also develop their reading abilities around these delightful characters and familiar cultural experiences. Therefore, for two of the books, *Magda's Tortillas* and *Chato's Kitchen*, I wrote readers theater scripts which we read following experiencing the authentic text. Using stick and paper puppets they designed as props, readers evidenced knowledge of the genre of theater and positioned their puppets and voices to take on the role of the different characters in the story. At times they read the script and at times created what they thought it should say. They negotiated meaning of text as they decided how to present this story.

Rosie: Chato is supposed to be cooking.

Ricardo: (Speaking as Chato) Yes, I can cook a wonderful fiesta—enchiladas, carne asada, chiles, and tortillas—round ones!

Rosie: O.K., the mice are ready to visit. Get ready to answer the door, Chato and Novio Boy.

Ricardo: (Speaking as Chato): We have all the food ready-a fiesta. We are hungry so I hope the mice come soon.

Sandy: (Speaking as mice): We are here and we brought Chorizo.
Ricardo: (As the door opens, he smiles and says) Come in.
Rosie: No, you are supposed to look surprised and scared. The mice have brought a dog. You are scared.
Ricardo: Oh, what was that word—cower?
J.M.: Cowered?
Ricardo: Yea, (as he and his puppet shy away from the mice and Chorizo).
Sandy: (as mice) Our friend, the dog, is nice. He won't bite. Let's eat this delicious food.
Ricardo: (As Chorizo) Yes, we want some sausage.
Rosie: No, only the dog is Chorizo because he looks like one.
Ricardo: (with a sly, knowing smile) The mice— (whispers to Rosie in Spanish) tricked them.

The readers also collaboratively wrote a class book based on foods they enjoyed and families eating together. This strategy followed their reading about ethnic foods in many of the books—*Magda's Tortillas, Chato's Kitchen, Too Many Tamales*, and *Let's Eat*. While time constraints limited attention to writing as opposed to reading and oral language, the occasions which did call for writing were prompted by and reflected a culturally relevant aspect of the book.

Considering the Implications

As various books elicited conversation to which they could make personal connections, these readers voluntarily presented news of their lives outside school, such as the birth of Sandy's brother or Ricardo's trip to his grandmother. They talked about the use of Spanish in their homes and who could and could not speak English in their families. The enthusiasm displayed when discussing books such as *Piñata Maker* or *Magda's Tortillas* grew as they remembered personal experiences to share. The literature these students explored created opportunity for them to share their own experiences through dialogue around the text and illustrations. Each student was motivated through the text and pictures to share their personal connections. As a result, their discussions provided opportunity for collaborative meaning making and extended their use of oral language.

"Creating meaning with a literary text involves connecting life and text" (Galda & Cullinan, 2001, p. 308). At the heart of culturally relevant instruction is attention to the wealth of experiences that readers bring to the reading of text. Facilitating this by providing books that relate culturally to the communities from which they come is a significant contribution to their efforts at making meaning as well as acknowledging that their communities are valued.

Could these students have made similar personal connections to other books that did not represent their culture? Yes, especially as individuals participate in multiple cultures that extend beyond ethnicity. It is desirable that a variety of text and genre are presented to all students to enrich their knowledge base and experiences. But in light of the transactional theory of reader response, we know that meaningful transactions begin with personal connections to the text; books that extol one's culture, to include language of the home, facilitate these connections.

A book may have culturally relevant content, however, the pedagogy that determines its use is also a factor as to its effectiveness in culturally relevant instruction (Barrera, & de Cortes, 1997; Bishop, 1997). A variety of engagements with culturally relevant books invite readers to use language in many different ways while at the same time the literature enhances the strategies that may be used. Literature discussions, response through art or music, and dramatization greatly support second language learning. Also, of importance is the community which is formed according to the interactions around reading experiences (Martinez-Roldain & Lopez-Robertson, 2000; Short, 1997). These children built community by making connections to each other as a result of sharing similar life experiences that in many cases was initiated by a culturally relevant book. Additionally, the use of such literature sends the message to young readers that their life experiences and language are valued in their classroom.

As I worked with these young readers and continuously searched for resources, I found proportionately few books that met my criteria of being culturally relevant, interesting, and on a reading level that was appropriate for second grade English learners. Wondering at this situation in light of current demographics, I asked questions of classroom teachers. Among the comments received from those who work with Mexican-American ESL students were the following descriptors reflecting their perceptions of books for Hispanic students: forced syntax; lack of availability of books, especially with culturally relevant topics; lack of relevant books at necessary reading levels; and use of language (Spanish) that is not authentic for their particular group. Considering the comments from informal interviews with teachers coupled with the responses of these readers, I began to gather insights from those who in some way are concerned with creating Mexican-American and Hispanic children's literature. Why are these books so few in number?

Extending the Discussion

As shared earlier in this manuscript, as early as 1940, educators were calling for materials that suited the interests and needs of diverse students and as scholars of both the fields of multicultural education and children's literature know, cultures of non-mainstream groups were not valued or represented in the books and other resources children were given to read. As issues of equity and democracy pushed diversity issues into the spotlight, the lack of representation of certain ethnic groups in literature became obvious. Why, however, does the gap fill so slowly and often loose ground as diverse groups such as Mexican-Americans increase in numbers? Earlier in this paper, Pat Mora points to the devaluing of the voices and experiences of Latina writers by sharing a racial slur she personally encountered—a statement questioning the worth of what a Latina author might write.

Lulu Delacre, a Puerto Rican author, addresses her belief that publishing books with Latino themes gets harder in that she must find stories with broad appeal. According to Anderson (2002), Delacre feels that once her books are discovered by librarians and teachers, they are out of print—often within only one or two years. Proper marketing, she feels, is needed.

Philip Lee from publishing company Lee and Low stated in an interview with Glenna Sloan (1999), "I think one challenge we face at Lee and Low is that there are simply not enough stories about people of color published, so every book that we publish about Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans is treated as the end-all book on that ethnic group" (pp. 29-30). This comment speaks to the fact that so little literature is published that teachers do not have choices in selecting literature or enough literature to adequately fill their classroom shelves. When working with these children, *Too Many Tamales* (Soto, 1993) was the only book of the initial ones I had brought to explore that they recognized from previous teachers and librarians.

At the time of this interview, Philip Lee also says that within the publishing industry, there is a lack of diversity within the publishing field. As with books, the most under-represented group was the Hispanic culture. He also added that "larger publishing companies did not take chances with unproven talent" (p. 32). Therefore, new Hispanic authors are slow to appear.

So what is being done in light of this present concern about Mexican-American children's literature. One positive insight is found within an interview by Chris Carger (2001) with Harriet Rohmer of Children's Book Press who enumerated ways they enhance their publication of multicultural literature. She related that they publish authors and artists from the culture telling, writing, and illustrating their own stories; go into the community, primarily to the teachers and parents just to talk about what is important to them and what kinds of things they would like their children to be reading; publish bilingual books; work with fine artists rather than commercial illustrators; and routinely ask authors who wrote for adults if they were interested in writing for children. This, indeed, appears to be an active approach to correcting this situation.

Likewise, even the continuous publishing of lists of books (Larson &

Martinez, 1998; Schon, 2000; Schon, 2001; Smolen & Ortiz-Castro, 2000; Welton, 1999) from which educators can select for their classrooms is a positive step. Perhaps these books will find their way to the hands and hearts of young readers before they are out of print and eliminate the concern voiced by Lulu Delecre above. Publications that include the voices and visions of writers through interviews and articles they have written, such as the references to Pat Mora above can also help to inform educators about the potential in this field. Another example is an interview with Rudolfo Anaya, by Jennifer Battle (2001) who recently received the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award. In this article he describes his desire to help preserve the culture of the Mexican-American people for children.

> The more complex, informed picture of Mexican American identity emerging in the '90s, particularly as a result of the writing of insiders, is a welcome and long-overdue change from the knowledge conveyed by books of previous decades. More of today's books are providing young readers of this background and others with authentic interpretations of what it means to be Mexican and American, a positive development that no doubt will help nurture children's self-image and multicultural understanding, (Barrera & Garza de Cortes, 1997, p. 143).

Barrera and Garza de Cortes continue by discussing the needs that exist in this area of children's literature: an increase in numbers of titles, promotion and encouragement of Hispanic authors as well as authentic content and themes, and an overall realization of the need and market for such literature.

While the focus of the inquiry described here deals with Mexican-American children, the need for books that deal with this culture does not reside only within this group of readers. Author Pat Mora (1998) stated,

> We sigh at ethnic tensions across the nation and in our neighborhood, and yet are only mildly engaged in putting literature to work, not as a sociological tool—even though it can have that effect—but as an art form that moves readers to hear another human's voice, thus to experience the doubts, fears, and joys of a person who may not look or sound at all like us. (p. 282)

Significant support for achieving a greater number of children's books representing the Mexican-American heritage can be found in the responses and experiences of literacy learners such as those described here as well as those who are not new to the learning of English but are new to exploring other cultures—discovering both similarities and differences. Alone, this inquiry is not a comprehensive picture of the complexities that entail responding to literature and the cultures therein. This larger picture is composed of many scenarios that show the transactions among diverse readers, contexts, and books. However, the interactions and involvement of these readers, in addition to raising questions, do contribute to the growing support for selecting literature that is relevant and invites readers to tell their stories and make intertextual connections "across literature and life" (Short, 1993), thus valuing the voices of both readers and creators of such books. As teachers discover the empowering dialogue and potential for comprehension, hopefully the demands for such books will increase and the voices of Mexican American authors will speak more frequently to all readers.

References

Anderson, N. (2002). The need for Latino children's literature. *The Florida Reading Quarterly, 38*(2), 6-10.

Au, K. H. (1993). *Literacy instruction in multicultural settings.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Barrera, R. (1992). The cultural gap in literature-based literacy instruction. *Education and Urban Society, 24*, 227-243.

Barrera, R. B., & de Cortes, O. G. (1997). Mexican-American children's literature in the 1990s: Toward authenticity. In V. Harris, (Ed.), *Using multiethnic literature in the K-8 Classroom* (pp. 129-154). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Barrera, R. B., Quiroa, R. E., & West-Williams, C. (1999). *Poco a poco:* The continuing development of Mexican American children's literature in the 1990's. *The New Advocate, 12* (4), 315-330.

Battle, J. (2001). A conversation with Rudolfo Anaya. *The New Advocate, 14*(2), 103-109.

Bishop, R. S. (1997). Selecting literature for a multicultural curriculum. In V. Harris, (Ed.), *Using multiethnic literature in the k-8 classroom* (pp. 1-19). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Carger, C. L. (2001). Harriet Rohmer on new voices and visions in multicultural literature. *The New Advocate, 14*(2), 119-126.

Cox, C., & Boyd-Batstone, P. (1997). *Crossroads: Literature and language in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Freeman, D. E., & Freeman, Y. (1994). *Between worlds.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Galda, L., & Cullinan, B. (2002). *Literature and the Child* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Galda, L., Rayburn, J. S., & Stanza, L. C. (2000). *Looking through the faraway end: Creating a literature-based reading curriculum with 2nd graders.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Garcia, G. E. (2000). How will bilingual/ESL programs in literacy change in the next millennium? *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*(4), 521-522.

Garcia, G. E., & Willis, A. (2001). Frameworks for understanding multicultural literacies. In Patricia Ruggiano Schmidt & Peter B. Mosenthal, (Eds.), *Literacy in the new age of multiculturalism and pluralism* (pp. 3-31). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Gee, J. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourse.* London: The Falmer Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory.* New York: Aldine.

Guild, P. (1994). The culture/learning style connection. *Educational Leadership, 51,* 16-21.

Harris, V. (Ed.). (1997). *Using multiethnic literature in the K-8 classroom.* Norway, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Izquierdo, E., Ligons, C., & Erwin, B. (1998). Preparing teachers for a culturally pluralistic society. Restructuring Texas teacher education series-6. Austin: Texas State Board for Educator Certification.

Jimenez, R. T., & Barrera, R. (2000). How will bilingual/ESL programs in literacy change in the next millennium? *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*(4), 522-523.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dream keepers: Successful teachers of African-American children.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Larson, J., & Martinez, C. (1998). Skeletons and marigolds: Dias de los Muertos. *Book Links, 8*(1), 40-42.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* New York: Sage Publications.

Martinez-Roldain, C. M., & Lopez-Robertson, J. M. (2000). Initiating literature circles in a first-grade bilingual classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 53*(4), 270-281.

Mora, P. (1998). Confessions of a Latina author. *The New Advocate, 11*(4), 279-290.

National Research Council Institute of Medicine (NRCIM) (1998). Educating language minority children. Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press.

Nieto, S. (1999). *Affirming diversity.* New York: Longman.

Reimer, K. M. (1992). Multiethnic literature: Holding fast to dreams. *Language Arts, 69*(1), 14-21.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1938/1995). *Literature as exploration.* New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text and the poem.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Schon, I. (2000). Recent children's books about Latinos. *Book Links, 9*(6), 37-41.

Schon, I. (2001). Los ninos y el mundo: Children's books in Spanish from around the world. *The Reading Teacher, 54*(7), 692-703.

Short, K. (1993). Making connections across literature and life. In K. Holland, R. Hungerford, & S. Ernst (Eds.), *Journeying: Children responding to literature* (pp. 284-301). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Short, K. (1997). *Literature as a way of knowing.* ME: Stenhouse.

Sloan, G. (1999). Multicultural matters: An interview with Philip Lee of Lee and Low books. *Journal of Children's Literature, 25*(1), 18-27.

Smolen, L. A., & Ortiz-Castro, V. (2000). Dissolving borders and broadening perspectives through Latino traditional literature. *The Reading Teacher, 53*(7), 566-578.

Truscott, D. M., & Watts-Taffe, S. (1998). Literacy instruction for second-language learners: A study of best practices. In T. Shanahan & F. V. Rodriguez-Brown (Eds.), *National reading conference yearbook 47* (pp. 242-252) Chicago: National Reading Conference.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Welton, A. (1999). The migrant experience. *Book Links, 9*(1), 11-14.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Children's Books

Ancona, G. (1994). *The pinata maker/El pinatero.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Chavarria-Chairez, B. (2000). *Magdas tortillas/Las tortillas de Magda.* Houston: Arte Publico Press.

Garza, C.L. (1990). *Family pictures, Cuadros de familia.* San Francisco: Children's Book Press.

Langlois, F. (1996). *The extraordinary gift.* New York: Abbeville Kids.

Mora, P. (1997). *Tomas and the library lady.* New York: Knopf.

Soto, G. (1993). *Too many tamales.* New York: Putnam & Grosset.

Soto, G. (1995). *Chato's kitchen.* New York: Putnam & Grosset..

Zamorano, A. (1996). *Let's eat!* New York: Scholastic.

A CULTURAL EXAMINATION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF LITERACY FROM A CONTEXTUAL SETTING IN WESTERN UKRAINE

I. LaVerne Raine
Wayne M. Linek
Brenda Smith

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Abstract

This case study employed informal ethnographic techniques and qualitative analysis to focus on the factors influencing the levels of literacy in the Ukraine. During a two-week trip to villages in Western Ukraine, the primary researcher stayed in private homes, visited schools, hospitals, churches, and interacted with individuals in market places. Informal interviews were conducted/recorded and field notes were collected of ongoing observations. Two fellow travelers kept daily journals of their impressions while the primary researcher kept a journal and collected artifacts that focused on the cultural influences leading to perceived high levels of literacy among the Ukrainian people. Factors that appeared to impact the high levels of literacy included the value placed on literacy in this particular culture; the availability of printed materials in the homes; the level of literacy required to meet standards for daily living; and the cultural expectation of literacy attainment. Overall, the Ukrainian people evidenced a deep cultural connection to their literacy attainment.

> Language, although rule governed, is living and, as such, is subject to improvisation, negotiation, and change.
> People use language (both oral and written) to communicate within activities, settings, and relationships.
> Meaning resides in the relationship of language forms to the functions they serve in those activities, settings, and relationships.
>
> Florio-Ruane and McVee, 2000, p. 155

The quotes above support the notion that if researchers want to understand how language is used in a particular culture, one should study living speech and describe it in its situational context. Thus, the current study of literacy in the Ukraine occurs within the culture and the situations in which it functions. But, can researchers who are not part of the culture adequately observe and describe the functions of literacy in that culture?

Dawkins (1989) and Blackmore (1999) have described changeable yet enduring cultural transmission units called memes. Memes appear to emerge out of the human ability to imitate the cultural behavior of others (Sylwester, 2000). For example, most children learn to speak by observing and listening to parental speech, then copying and imitating the speech patterns they hear. Many cultural concepts composed of memes such as family, school, and literacy are present across cultures. Given that these memes are present in each culture, though they may be evidenced in various ways, supports the view that an individual from a different cultural perspective can make insightful observations about the functions of literacy within a culture when given opportunity to interact with various contextual settings. Thus, understanding how culture impacts concepts of literacy as it evolves within specific contexts becomes important if we are to better understand our own evolving concepts of literacy.

Before presenting the methodology and findings of this study; an attempt at contextualization is presented beginning with evolving conceptions of literacy and literacy attainment. A summarization of research that has addressed literacy development in countries other than the United States is then provided followed by an historical overview of education and literacy in the Ukraine. Finally, background information is provided to explain how the opportunity to study literacy in western Ukraine occurred.

Evolving Conceptions of Literacy and Literacy Attainment

Traditionally studies of literacy and literacy attainment have focused on the acquisition of the skills needed to read and write and how this process is associated with print-texts (Hagood, 2000). However, the attainment of literacy in fact is broader based and grounded in a contextual setting across all cultural groups (Baker & Luke, 1991; Egan-Robertson & Bloome, 1998).

Literacy acquisition theory includes the influence of culture and the variety of print material one is exposed to in the process of daily activities (Geertz, 1973). Thus, it becomes important to describe the influence of daily activities and evidences of literacy in specific cultures.

Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985) considered language to be a psychological tool because it evolves through sociocultural interactions. Purves (1991) supports the view that an individual's literacy development cannot be separated from the social/cultural contexts and from the beliefs held by individuals about themselves within the culture. Defining literacy within the cultural context (Winterowd, 1989) serves as the perspective for observations of literacy usage (Luke & Freebody, 1997). When defined within social/cultural contexts the major criterion for literacy is whether the individuals function adequately within their own cultural context (Worsham, 1998). Thus, as an integral part of peoples' lives literacy can be better understood within a cultural context. Geography, history, and traditions of the various peoples all have an influence. Literacy is woven into the daily social and work activities that are encountered to accomplish the tasks. Thus, describing specific cultural contexts gives a greater understanding of the varied levels of literacy attainment across cultures.

The process of becoming literate involves learning the conventions of written text and how the society of which an individual is a member responds to and uses written text (Purves, 1991). As a member of a culture certain knowledge is learned. This may be tacit learning or the knowledge may be intentionally transmitted so that one can function acceptably within that culture. Thus, members learn to read the culture and are able to successfully operate within it (Hirsch, 1987). This reading of the culture yields the ability to judge what is acceptable behavior and what is valued. If literacy is part of what is valued the evidence should be observable to an individual outside of the culture because it is believed that an observer could view individuals of various ages and in many different settings being literate or making use of literacy skills in daily activities. Thus, the current study attempts to describe culturally related observational evidences of the value of literacy from a contextual setting in western Ukraine.

Literacy Development in Countries Other than the United States

In an overview of the reading research in the United Kingdom, Harrison (2000) reported that study of reading processes has been mainly carried out by psychologists, research into practice had been conducted mostly by scholars in schools of education, and policy-driven research had been directed by government agencies. Research in reading processes has tended to focus more on phonological awareness than comprehension in the United Kingdom.

Findings suggest that reading instruction should: combine training in letter-sound relationships with phonological categorization, present onset-rime analogies for use in recognizing unfamiliar words, form explicit links between children's underlying phonological awareness and experiences in learning to read, and context effects are not repressed in the process of word recognition for early readers. Research into reading pedagogy suggests that: teachers spend too much time listening to individual children read, parent participation appears to have positive effects when qualitative evaluation is employed, and Reading Recovery is expensive but effective. Harrison also noted that since 1988, when a national curriculum was introduced, England and Wales have undergone a decade of unprecedented government-initiated change that has impacted both research and practice. He concludes that social aspects of literacy and studies that look at literacy practices within a culture are the future direction of research.

Wilkinson, Freebody, and Elkins (2000) state that reading research in Australia parallels the research in other English-speaking countries. However, when one includes New Zealand, there is more focus on students with non-English speaking or bilingual backgrounds due to concerns regarding access to literacy in linguistically and culturally diverse environments. Thus, they conclude that equity of education, keeping good instructional practices while promoting educational reforms to address current needs, and sociocultural aspects of literacy should be critical aspects of future research.

In Latin America, there has been a major move toward decentralization driven by the decline of military governments, economic demands, and administrative manageability (Santana, 2000). Education is a complex issue because it is immersed in the complexity of many indigenous languages and cultures. In Latin America the relationship between research in education and policy is surrounded by an atmosphere of immediacy so that researchers are often immersed in practical applications of research as well as policy decisions. Thus, literacy research in Latin America responds to its context and Santana suggests that there is a need to take advantage of what had been learned from past experiences, to identify good instructional practices, and to respond to cultural differences.

When the Soviets dominated central and eastern Europe, control of education affected teacher/student relationships and daily classroom practice (Meredith & Steele, 2000). Through intimidation, teachers became conduits and students passive receptors of information and communist ideology (Karsten & Majoor, 1994; Rust, Knost, & Wichmann, 1994). Four types of damage done to education under Communism include:

- damage to knowledge through neglect, oppression, controlled access, and pervasive censorship

- damage to thinking through limitations in experimentation with new ideas
- damage to the teaching profession through loss of prestige, lack of respect for roles, and by requiring schools to transfer ideology
- damage to values by imposing a pseudo-value structure (Meredith & Steele, 2000, p. 31).

Universities no longer conducted educational research; instead it was formulated by state authorities and housed in research academies. Educational researchers were not permitted to pursue independent research agendas; rather studies were formulated to show support for the imposed political system.

Therefore, basic research about schools, schooling, and literacy is desperately needed. Currently, some study of cross-cultural perceptions of literacy acquisition has occurred (Anderson, 1995) and several investigations in literacy teacher education have been documented in eastern Europe (Bloem, Williams, Nixon-Ponder, & Novotny, 2000; King, Jampole, & Berry, 1995; Newton & Smolen, 2000), but to date no research on the functions and evolution of literacy in the context of Ukraine has occurred.

Historical Overview of Education and Literacy in the Ukraine

Historically, literacy and public education have been a top priority in the Ukraine. As the country was freed from communist control and transitioned to an independent nation in the 90's the educational systems became managed and controlled by the local villages and towns (Ukraine Ministry of Education, 1990-1999). What had been government factory operated childcare schools were opened to the public. Each school district is now accountable to education agencies, which prescribe the number of hours per week that each of the academic subjects is to be instructed.

The basic education system in Ukraine is structured into three successive stages that take into account the development of a child's personality. The stages, as described by the Ukraine Ministry of Education are as follows:

- **The first stage**—the elementary school—will include 4 years of studying. It will enable to relieve students and give teachers the opportunity to achieve success in improving basic knowledge and skills in Mathematics, Language, Valeology, an environmental subject.
- **The second stage** of the compulsory secondary education will comprise the modified 5 years basic school, where students will get knowledge and skills in science and humanitarian subjects, mother tongue and foreign languages. It will ease toward making choice for each

individual for further education. The first and the second stages will form the formal basic education for all with 9 years of duration.

- **The third stage** will last three years in institutions of general education and in the system of professional training. At this stage, thorough study of the limited group of subjects, which will be chosen by students for their further studying (in universities, institutes and academies), is envisaged. The youth will get specialities and opportunities to enter the labour market, studying in institutions of vocational training. (HtmlResAnchor www.ednu.kiev.ua/edu_se_bas.htm)

While many factors concerning the schools changed with independence, what reportedly remained was a commitment to high quality education. However, the government reported a reduction in the number of pre-schools in the1990's because many parents worked with their preschool children when there was not a convenient place to attend school. This is particularly true for the less populated areas of western Ukraine. So, although an official description of schooling policies has been articulated, the current cultural definition of literacy in the new independent Ukraine has not been described.

Contextual Background Information

One year prior to the current study a trip was made to central Ukraine by invitation of the Ukrainian government to tour and administer aid an provide food, medical supplies, and genuine goodwill. While it was the primary researcher's first trip to the Ukraine, she traveled with a group known as "Missionary Encouragers" which had made many trips to Ukraine since 1991. This group had connected with city officials and religious leaders in each city to organize activities. The mission of the humanitarian group was to visit nursing homes, hospitals, village markets, schools, and orphanages and administer to their needs. The primary researcher traveled with 200 other Americans to nine cities along the Dnepr River and Black Sea from May 10 to May 18, 2000. After flying to Kiev, she boarded a chartered cruise liner on the Dnepr River where the group of Americans was joined by 95 Ukrainian church pastors, their wives and interpreters.

This group also had thousands of copies of Gospel tracts, New Testaments printed in Russian and Ukrainian, and survey forms printed in Russian on the left side and English on the right side. The survey forms were completed individually as the missionaries interacted with the Ukrainian people in the local towns and villages. The material and supplies were given as gifts from the Americans. The concept of gift is important here because something perceived as being free has a negative connotation in Ukraine. The reason for the negative connotation is that under communist rule when people were told that something was free, it always had a catch to it, so people became distrustful of something being "free".

In the process of completing the questionnaires and interactions with the people in the various institutions and marketplaces, the primary researcher began to connect observations into patterns that were meaningful. For example, no individual over the age of 6 had been encountered who could not read the printed material. About 13,000 questionnaires were completed so the group had encountered many people in the places visited. The people were friendly to Americans and eager to visit. If they spoke English they often wanted to practice using their English with an American. This they did easily and with confidence as they worked through the language barriers. Most of the conversations were through interpreters who traveled with the group or who were hired to spend the day in each port city.

Visits to the schools did not reveal much information as to how the children had learned to read, since instructional time was not observed because schedules were changed to provide time for the group visits. Typically the children were called into an assembly where a team presented a program and then handed out children's bibles and bags of toys and candy. The children were always eager to receive their gifts but would politely wait their turn. The atmosphere was one of openness and friendliness. During one of the school visits the children returned to their classrooms and the team went into each room and handed out bags filled with toys and small objects that had been put together by American children. The primary researcher was standing near one child who was having trouble with the string holding the bag together. He looked up and began talking to her in his language and asked for help. She knew what he wanted by observation and spoke back to him in English while giving the help that he had requested. It was a very easy, comfortable exchange. The children in that class were about 10 years old and each seemed just as comfortable to have this group of strangers in their room.

The room was typical of the others observed in the Ukraine and looked very much like American classrooms in the 1950's—desks, black boards, and a lack of extras. There were some books, but no classroom library and the pupil's desks were not overloaded with books. There were perhaps four or five books per student. The rooms were sparse, clean, and filled with polite friendly children who were curious about what the team had and were eager to visit while the teachers were kindly open to sharing their students and school with the American visitors. It was obvious that instruction was a routine and learning was expected. The teachers expressed concerns about the physical and spiritual needs of the children. A very high level of commitment to the needs of the children in all of the schools and orphanages was observed. Each life was valued and there was professional pride in the accomplishments of the schools since independence. They openly spoke of the economic struggles and hope for a better future and had a quiet resolve to make the best of what they did have.

When the group was not doing official missionary work, the Americans enjoyed visiting with the Ukrainian interpreters. These interactions were very friendly, interesting, and gave the primary researcher information about the way of life in Ukraine and the ongoing changes. National and cultural pride was expressed by one interpreter who had lived the first ten years of his life under Russian communist rule and the second ten of his twenty years in Ukrainian independence. Commenting on his impressions as a young child he said, "Though we were under Russian rule we always knew that we were Ukrainian." That sense of who they were as a people no doubt contributed to keeping the Ukrainian language alive and being read even though it was not taught in the schools. Overall, the primary researcher observed what appeared to be a relatively high level of literacy within the heavily populated areas of the country. The trip was a positive experience, but the primary researcher began to wonder if her perceptions of the high levels of literacy were valid. Thus, a return visit was planned for more structured observation and formal study of culture and literacy in Ukraine.

The Present Study

The objectives of this qualitative inquiry-based study were to record observations of the levels and uses of literacy among the people of Ukraine from May 9 through May 16, 2001. During this second visit to Ukraine, questions guiding interviews and observations of the people in their local setting were:

- What are the expectations of literacy attainment in the Ukraine?
- What is the level of literacy required for daily living in the Ukraine?
- How has the Ukrainian culture shaped literacy levels?
- How is literacy valued in the Ukrainian culture?
- What is the availability of printed materials in a Ukrainian home?
- What are the factors that account for the perceived high levels of literacy among the Ukrainian people?

Method

Data Collection and Analysis

This case study of cultural literacy in a contextual setting in Ukraine employed the informal ethnographic interview process and personal contact in data collection (Mills, 2000). The objectives of this qualitative inquiry-based study were to record observations of the levels and uses of literacy among the people of Ukraine. The data were compiled from the written journals and observations of three Americans during a visit to western Ukraine.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The first member of the American team was the primary researcher who collected field notes of observations, kept a journal of events/impressions, and conducted interviews. This researcher conducted in depth interviews with Ira Shutova who was an English teacher in a high school in Khmelnytskyy and served as one of the interpreters that traveled with the primary researcher for five days. The other two interpreters, Slavic and Oleksandr, and the host family were also interviewed to provide explanations and to gain insight into the observations. The second member of the American team visiting Ukraine was designated as team secretary. This researcher worked closely with one of the interpreters for accuracy of names/locations and authenticated the names of the villages and various observation settings included in the secretary's final report. The third team member was the primary researcher's husband who was with the researcher throughout the two-week visit and kept a journal.

Data were initially analyzed by the primary researcher using constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1994). Review of the multiple data sources revealed that reflections in the primary researcher's journal provided the richest source of data. Thus, these reflections served as the primary data source. As the primary researcher generated themes, she conducted informal perception checking with the second and third team members, the interpreters, and the adults in the host family throughout the time spent in the Ukraine for face validity. The overarching themes that emerged are listed under each subheading in the results section. Upon return to the United States, two researchers at the primary researcher's university served as formal raters and each theme was corroborated and verified using the journals, field notes, and interview data. Finally, the researcher's husband read the final research report and corroborated the findings and conclusions.

The Setting

The area of western Ukraine, specifically the city of Khmelnytskyy and small villages in the surrounding area, was the larger setting for this study. The actual places of observation included market places, schools, hospitals, village centers, churches, and one family's home. The host family of five consisted of a husband, a wife, two daughters, and one son that lived in an apartment in Khmelnytskyy. The missionary team of seven Americans and three interpreters traveled to the small villages which were one to two hours driving time from Khmelnytskyy each day for five days. The team traveled in two vehicles driven by the Ukrainian hosts and returned each evening to spend the night in Khmelnytskyy. The missionary team was divided in half for the evening with some members staying in the host family's apartment and some staying in another apartment. The three Americans collecting data spent five days with the same interpreters and host family in their environment so that it was possible to develop meaningful relationships and to gain a deeper understanding of the Ukrainian way of life.

Findings

The findings are listed in the order of the questions that gave focus to the study. Observations, interviews, artifacts, and journal entries are woven together to present a comprehensive finding for each question.

What are the expectations of literacy attainment in the Ukraine?

The Ukrainian people have a culture of literacy that has been so for over a thousand-year period. Public education is compulsory until the age of fifteen. As noted earlier, the first stage or elementary schooling includes 4 years of studying to give students the opportunity to achieve basic knowledge and skills in Mathematics, Language, and Valeology, an environmental subject. The second stage of compulsory education is comprised of 5 years basic school where students get knowledge and skills in science and humanitarian subjects, mother tongue, and foreign languages. Thus, the first and second stages comprise the 9 years of formal basic education for all. However, about 50% of the teens then continue their education in trade schools or universities. This percentage is higher in the more populated regions where access is easier. These facts and figures from the Ukraine Ministry of Education were corroborated by the hosts and interpreters.

What is the level of literacy required for daily living in the Ukraine?

The researchers could only infer the level of literacy required for daily living. Ira commented, "You can not survive if you can not read." It would seem that there might be a basic level of literacy necessary for all or most individuals, but the level required for life in the remote or rural areas appeared much lower than in the cities. The people traveled by foot or bicycle and used the barter system for much of their trade. One lady declined to accept a Bible when it was offered to her saying through an interpreter, "I have no money to pay for it." It was explained to her that it was a gift and she readily accepted it with a smile and thank you. Slavik, one of the interpreters said that, "When she said she had no money it wasn't that she was just low at the time . . . many of the rural people live and manage without using currency."

Directions along the highway and signs in the villages were in print. In fact, the general signage in all public places had no pictures or symbols to support nonreaders or accommodate non-native speakers. Although assessing whether or not individuals could actually read this signage was impossible, other observations revealed that all but one person encountered had a high enough literacy level to read with comprehension all of the print material that the missionary group presented. Only in one village market was a female vendor observed who could not read the survey. The woman who could not read seemed to be about 40 years old. The lady in the space next to hers simply took the survey and read it to her and marked the survey as the lady answered her. They both seemed very comfortable with this process and it appeared that the reader had helped her friend before. This was the only such encounter with a nonreader while connecting with hundreds of people in the city and villages during the entire visit.

How has the Ukrainian culture shaped literacy levels?

Literacy appears to be a deep cultural tradition. Herodat, an ancient historian and traveler, wrote of the Khmelnytskyy region as a beautiful place of clear sweet lakes and rivers and grasslands for white wild horses (Darmas'ky, 1996). These first writings date back to approximately the 10th century. The history of the people and land is kept alive by monuments, songs, films, and artists' paintings. Today 80 percent of the population of Ukraine is made up of ethnic Ukrainians (Komendant, 2000). So the rich history and folk tales of the land are also largely those of the people.

During an interview, Ira explained, "Literacy is a way of life in the Ukraine and it is a social expectation that everyone will learn to read." Ira's response was supported by observations within the host family, as there appeared to be no concern that school age children might not be successful in reading with comprehension the material the researchers presented to them. In the classrooms, instructional activities would be suspended during the visits, however, it was noted that the children had books on their desks.

How is literacy valued in the Ukrainian culture?

It was observed that our host and guide, Oleksandr, was very mindful to reserve a stack of 150 children's bibles for the children in the villages that he visited on a regular basis. He said, "The books are valued and will contribute to the children and their culture." Slavik, another one of our interpreters, asked the researcher about sending him some material to use to teach his pre-school children to read English. Indeed literacy appeared to be woven throughout the cultural experiences observed.

Books are greatly prized items among all the people. Ira reported that the schools bought the textbooks for the children. However, she commented, "The better books have to be purchased by parents . . . [and that] . . . schools furnish only the most basic text material." She further commented that, "Some individual schools are free to chose the texts that they want to use and other schools are told by a central administration what text to purchase." It was unknown to the primary researcher how this decision was made. It was observed that the principal of the schools that were visited seemed to have complete autonomy about the activities in their respective schools. By prior arrangements the team was invited into the schools, but while there the principals or teachers would decide to extend the time allotted. Approval did not seem to be required even when the day's schedule had to be adjusted by several teachers. The atmosphere in the schools seemed to reflect the principal's attitude.

What is the availability of printed materials in a Ukrainian home?

The home where the American team stayed was located in a high-rise apartment building. The apartment consisted of a living room, one bedroom, a kitchen, one bathroom, and a hallway. The living room served as a dining room with a table set up in the middle. The missionary team took breakfast and dinner there often with twelve or so people sitting around the connected tables. At the end of the day the tables were taken up and the sofas became beds. One wall of this main room was closet space and a unit of bookshelves with approximately 100 to 200 books that seemed to be of an assorted interest none of which looked new. Though this well educated family had three children with the youngest a boy about 10 years old, no collection of books that looked like children's literature was found, but there were a few books that looked like beginner readers. Considering these observations might give an understanding as to why Oleksandr was so excited to have the children's colorful bibles to give out to children that were likely less advantaged than his own.

What are the factors that account for the perceived high levels of literacy among the Ukrainian people?

There appear to be several factors in producing the perceived high level of literacy. One factor is that the Ukrainian and Russian languages are alphabetic. The fact that these languages are alphabetic makes decoding a straightforward process and teaching them at home becomes a simple task. A second factor appears to be a by-product of communist rule because prior to 1991 only the Russian language was permitted to be taught in the schools. However, the Ukrainian and Russian languages share a lot of common elements and many of the people speak both languages. To maintain the Ukrainian language under communist rule, it had to be taught at home and in non-formal school settings. A third factor appears to be that the primary years of school are focused on literacy attainment and the children have only one teacher for the first four years. The classes are self-contained and have 28 to 35 children per class. There is an emphasis on highly qualified teachers and they are well respected by the children and the community. Observations and interviews revealed a high level of commitment among the teachers to the children and their welfare. Another factor that appears to be a positive force is that the families seem very supportive and provide literacy development for their children prior to their beginning kindergarten. Specifically, Ira said, "Most children actually begin reading in kindergarten and the preparation by parents is significant to this attainment." However, Ira expressed some concern that not all parents were as supportive of the literacy preparation of their children as the school professionals would like.

Limitations

Several limitations to the current study must be discussed before elaborating on the findings. First, there is an inherent difficulty when a person from one culture tries to understand and interpret what is going on in another culture. Although two additional observers collected data in an effort to perception check the findings, the two additional observers were also from the United States. Second, limited time in western Ukraine may have prevented the primary researcher from reaching a point of saturation in data collection during specific events as the timing of the group movements were on a tight schedule. Finally, even though interpretations of observations and findings were checked with native interpreters and the adults in the host family, bias toward presenting a positive view of the region, its culture, and its people may have interfered with objectivity.

Discussion

The Ukrainian people evidence a deep cultural connection to their literacy attainment. Clearly literacy is valued and almost assumed. Observations of and conversations/interviews with the Ukrainian people provided insights and verification of the high rate of literacy reported for Ukraine and observed on the previous visit. Clearly literacy is an integral and valued component of the culture. To a visitor outside of the native culture, the literacy seemed to be naturalistic or resulting as a natural course of language development. To a literacy educator this inspired questions as to how the literacy education had developed. The questions of whether an individual outside of a culture can make adequate and accurate observations of literacy as a product seems to be answered and supported. The question then arises as to how this was developed and what comparisons could be made with other nations.

Some features of the education system suggest possible factors. When comparing Ukrainian with English, the fact that Ukrainian is an alphabetic language makes it easier to decode because an individual has to master only one layer of orthographic relations. For example, English has not only an alphabetic layer, but also a pattern and meaning layer of orthography so that words are spelled by three different interwoven systems or layers of orthography. A language that is completely alphabetic has a more simplistic orthography so that if an individual can speak the language and knows the alphabetic system, learning to read is an easier task than in a language of a more complex system.

A finding of interest to the researchers was that of the primary school structure having the same teacher with a group of children for the first four years of school. It is not known if this is the general practice over the entire nation or just the western part of the nation where the interviews took place. Certainly this places a huge responsibility upon the primary teacher who is responsible for the students. National education publications did reveal an emphasis upon language and literacy by requiring a major portion of the school day be spent in literacy instruction.

The idea that more books and computers or computer programs and what ever else is perceived or promoted in the United States to increase reading development did not have support from the observations in a foreign country of limited resources. The emphasis seemed to be on the teacher and the preparation of that individual to be accountable to the children and to the school. While more, newer and better materials to work with were desired, the essential factor came back once again to whom the teacher is and what is happening during the instructional time. This seems to be of particular interest at a time in the U.S. in which many schools are placing children in front of computers for primary reading instruction. Is it time again to investigate the amount of time that a primary student spends with a teacher in direct reading instruction per day in America?

Although there has been a lack of significant educational research for decades, this research team would caution Ukrainian educators not to change their current valuing system as the basis for literacy education. It appears that the time is ripe to study what they are doing that is working so as to develop their own identification of best practice and to identify what is working. Sometimes in the United States, we are so enamored with new programs and the cutting edge that we either dump the old or redefine it so that it sounds new. This constant shifting results in an unsettledness, a constant creation of new standards, and following trendy new programs. This shifting does not permit teachers to have extended experiences with materials and standards so that they can develop their own successful methods regardless of the program. Instead, they are constantly learning how to use new materials, figuring out how to meet new standards, and preparing children to take the newest test. Although our capitalist society is remarkable in its fostering of creativity, new inventions, and making better and more efficient products; this business model is not necessarily the best way to approach basic literacy education. In this instance, we may have something to learn from the Ukrainians.

In conclusion, it appears that an individual from outside a culture can make adequate observations about the literacy of a culture to gain an understanding of the levels of literacy and the use and value of literacy within a culture whether or not they speak the language. This finding is of interest as literacy educators increasingly study and visit countries throughout the world.

References

Anderson, J. (1995). How parents perceive literacy acquisition: A cross-cultural study. In W. M. Linek & E. G. Sturtevant (Eds.), *Generations of Literacy*. Harrisonburg, VA: College Reading Association.

Baker, C. D., & Luke, A. (1991). *Towards a critical sociology of reading pedagogy*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamin.

Blackmore, S. (1999). *The Meme Machine*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bloem, P. L., Williams, L., Nixon-Ponder, S., & Novotny, P. (2000). Lessons in teacher education: What we learn from overseas. In P. E. Linder, W. M. Linek, E. G. Sturtevant, & J. R. Dugan (Eds.), *Literacy at a New Horizon*. Readyville, TN: College Reading Association.

Darmas'kyi, M. M. (1996). *KHmelnitchina*. Ukraine: Firma "CHorli", Firma "Polygraf."

Dawkins, R. (1989). *The Selfish Gene*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Education for All 2000 Assessment: Ukraine National Report, Ministry of Education of Ukraine, 1990 - 1999, Kyiv - 1999. Retrieved January 10, 2002 from HtmlResAnchor http://www.ednu.kiev.ua/edu_se_ bas.htm

Egan-Robertson, A., & Bloome, D. (Eds.). (1998). *Students as researchers of culture and language in their own communities*. Cresskill, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Florio-Ruane, S., & McVee, M. (2000). Ethnographic approaches to literacy research. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research Volume* III. Mahwah, NJ: Earlbaum.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of culture*. New York: Basic Books.

Glaser, B. G. (1994). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. In B. G. Glaser (Ed.), *More grounded theory methodology: A reader* (pp. 182-196). Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Hagood, M. C. (2000). New times, new millennium, new literacies. *Reading Research and Instruction, 39*, 311-328.

Harrison, C. (2000). Reading research in the United Kingdom. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research Volume* III. Mahwah, NJ: Earlbaum.

Hirsch, E. D. (1987). *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Karsten, S., & Majoor, D. (Eds.). (1994). *Education in East and Central Europe: Changes after the Fall of Communism*. Munster, Germany: Waxmann.

King, C. M., Jampole, E. S., & Berry, G. Y. (1995). The freedom to teach: A glimpse of schooling and reading instruction in today's Russia. In W. M. Linek & E. G. Sturtevant (Eds.), *Generations of Literacy*. Harrisonburg, VA: College Reading Association.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Komendant, G. (2000). *The All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christian Baptists* [Brochure]. Kiev, Ukraine: AAUECB.

Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (1997). The social practices of reading. In S. Muspratt, A. Luke, & P. Freebody, (Eds.), *Constructing Critical Literacies: Teaching and Learning Textual Practice*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.

Meredith, K. S., & Steele, J. L. (2000). Education in transition: Trends in Central and Eastern Europe. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research Volume* III. Mahwah, NJ: Earlbaum.

Mills, G. E. (2000). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Newton, E., & Smolen, L. A. (2000). From theory to practice: A qualitative case survey of TEFL peace corps volunteers in Armenia. In P. E. Linder, W. M. Linek, E. G. Sturtevant, & J. R. Dugan (Eds.), *Literacy at a New Horizon*. Readyville, TN: College Reading Association.

Purves, A. (1991). The textual contact: Literacy as common knowledge and conventional wisdom. In E. Jennings & A. Purves (Eds.), *Literate Systems and Individual Lives*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Rust, V. D., Knost, P., & Wichmann, J. (Eds.). (1994). *Education and the values crisis in Central and Easter Europe*. Frankfurt, Germany: Lang.

Santana, I. S. (2000). Literacy research in Latin America. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research Volume* III. Mahwah, NJ: Earlbaum.

Sylwester, R. (2000). *A biological brain in a cultural classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilkinson, I. A. G., Freebody, P., & Elkins, J. (2000). Reading research in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research Volume* III. Mahwah, NJ: Earlbaum.

Winterowd, W. R. (1989). *The culture and the politics of literacy*. Oxford: Oxford Press.

Worsham, T. (1998). From cultural literacy to cultural thoughtfulness. *Educational Leadership*, 46, 20-21.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AS A CATALYST FOR AN EFL/ESL WRITING CLASS

Sabiha Aydelott

American University in Cairo

Abstract

Children's literature is appealing to readers of all ages because the messages conveyed belong to a level of sophistication that interest readers from early childhood to adulthood. As I feel that this form of literature can be used to reach college/university students, I chose to introduce it in my writing class. My objective was to motivate my students to explore ideas, concepts, topics, and themes that were introduced to them through children's literature, and to conduct research related to these ideas, concepts, topics and themes and, as a final step, to write research papers.

This paper focuses on the inclusion of children's literature in a university writing class in order to motivate students to explore different themes and topics for their research papers. The rational behind incorporating such literature was multi-purpose, as I was hopeful that the introduction of children's literature would motivate and encourage my students to discuss various issues, explore them, read about them, and eventually write about them. As Judith Gilliland (1995), author of several children's books, states, "Multicultural books for children can give us—children *and* adults—perspectives on our own lives. They can lead us to question some of our own assumptions about what is important. We can learn that maybe we do not have all the answers, that we may find something of value outside our own small world." (p. 106) I felt that children's literature had much to offer my students, especially as this literature is not necessarily only for children. Gilliland (1995), too, feels that such books are for everyone. She points out that children's books "are exploring ideas and issues in new ways, ways new not only to children's literature but to books in general. Picture books, in particular, have become a new medium of expression for many writers. They have found a medium that gives them a broad range of expression, one that doesn't tie them to the conventions of the past. Large ideas can be condensed into small scenes, into poetry even, and they can be accompanied by illustrations that bring them to life. The result is a new kind of book, a book not only for children, but for everyone" (p. 112).

Gilliland's comment reflects the vision that some educators have had regarding its inclusion in various curricula. Children's literature, as a genre, has great potential and adaptability for various learning situations. It is often used to help students understand concepts and ideas in various content areas. However, it is not usually given much importance in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or in an English as a Second Language (ESL) context, especially at the higher or tertiary levels, where it can be used effectively. Keeping this in mind, I introduced selected children's literature to my university writing class in order to motivate students to explore certain concepts and ideas, to develop an awareness of other cultures, and to use this new understanding in order to construct topics for their research papers.

At the American University in Cairo the medium of instruction is English; however, for most students English is either a second or third language. Students enrolled in the upper level writing course are required to write a series of papers pertaining to a particular theme and based on research. In order to capture the interest of the students and to motivate them to explore literature and different genres, I encouraged the students to research topics related to cultural awareness and racism, to study the themes underlying the 'stories' as well as language and dialect use, to consider several points of view, and to recognize elements of intertextuality.

The use of children's literature was a rather controversial step, as most of my students felt that only children should read such literature. My students were freshman university students, though some of them had spent several semesters at the university either at the English Language Institute, or repeating their writing courses trying to reach the required level of competency. These students had gone through their entire school years without reading much, other than that which was required for a course. They did not read for pleasure nor were they familiar with different forms of literature. A reason for their not being exposed to different forms of literature is the general unavailability of such books, and the inflexibility of the local curricula that only include classic novels, plays, and poetry for literature. I was fortunate that I was able to borrow books from the excellent collection of children's literature at Cairo American College's international school library. By borrowing these books I was able to introduce my students to books and stories to which they previously had no exposure. The only stories that my students were familiar with were a few well-known fairy tales, such as Cinderella, Snow White, and Beauty and the Beast—due largely to Disney movies.

The students' initial reaction was rather negative. They felt that as university students they should deal with more 'sophisticated' texts. In order to overcome this resistance, the first step was to bring in picture books which had strong messages to convey, and which could lead to active discussions. The students were also required to analyze the way language had been used, the tone or mood, whether the author and illustrator were perpetuating a stereotype or not, and whether they thought that the books were presenting aspects of particular cultures. The two books that I first brought in for discussion were *The Day of Ahmed's Secret* (1990) and *Sami and the Time of the Troubles* (1992), both written by Judith Gilliland. The reason I selected the book on Ahmed was that it was set in Cairo—a Cairo that was familiar, yet unfamiliar, to the students. The majority of the students belong to a totally different socio-economic class from Ahmed's; therefore, they would not be familiar with what he has to undergo everyday in order to survive, and in order to help his family. Yet, he shares something with them; he, too, has the desire to become literate, to be able to read and write.

My reason for particularly choosing these two books was because they break images that are prevalent in the West. The students were familiar with the awful stereotyping of the Arabs that is perpetuated by the news media, films, and literature in the West. The book on Ahmed showed them that not all Westerners hold negative images about the Arabs, that they are aware of the struggle faced by many on a daily basis. The book on Ahmed celebrates courage and hope, as does the book on Sami. He lives during the time of the civil war in Beirut and is able to deal with the troubles of war because he is secure in his family's love. This, too, is a book that is full of hope, courage, optimism, and the strength of the human spirit. These books helped the students to look at themselves and their surroundings more critically and to question that which they had hitherto accepted unequivocally. Discussions resulting from the introduction of these two books caused my students to look at people less fortunate than themselves, in a more kindly manner and to become more sympathetic and sensitive towards those living in war-torn countries. Peter Hunt (1995) is of the view that children's literature helps us to "find links in deepest human emotions, confrontations with virtually all aspects of the human emotions, confrontations with virtually all aspects of human experience" (p. ix). I feel that by introducing my students to children's literature, I caused them to find links with human emotions and to confront issues related to various experiences—whether their own or of others.

Themes and Issues

One of the objectives for using children's literature was to develop an awareness and understanding in the students that children's literature encompasses a large variety of genre, themes, forms, and that it deals with issues that are 'adult' in nature and representative of the time in which the literature was written. In the nineteenth century a common theme in children's literature was death. However, during the first half of the twentieth century the topic of death virtually disappeared from children's literature; but it made its reappearance in books such as *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952) and *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson, 1977). Since then, several children's books have focused on the theme of death—that of animals as well as people. Another theme often found in children's books is that of money; this could be the search for a hidden treasure, or the search for family happiness, or the search for inner satisfaction—all resulting in success. The theme of Good triumphing over Evil is often presented through the genre of fantasy and make believe. A currently popular series dealing with this particular theme is the ongoing story of Harry Potter—one that most students had heard of, even if they had not read any of the books about him.

Exploring Literature

Exploring literature was instrumental in aiding the students to develop a background and context for learning. This exploration motivated and encouraged them to investigate various issues that they could consider and research in order to write papers. Some of the issues that they explored were the role of women; child abuse; social injustices; cultural differences; racism; war and its effects. Carr et al. (2001) extolled the virtues of a story, as it can help provide a missing context. Citing Mickelsen (2000) they pointed out that "A story is a strong teaching tool that offers a situated perspective for knowledge, thinking, and learning. Add striking illustrations, and picture books become a powerful medium for building understanding of social issues and celebrating diversity." Quoting Richardson (2000) they stated "Books chosen to read aloud to older students should contain provocative issues and moral dilemmas to stimulate critical thinking and discussion and promote collaborative construction of meaning" (pp. 147-148). The inclusion of books containing controversial issues and dilemmas encouraged my students not only to develop an understanding of cultural diversity but also to respect it.

Through the exploration of literature the students were also exposed to the use of literary devices, such as allusion, metaphor, irony, pun, satire, and symbolism. As the students were enrolled in a writing class, they were made cognizant of the writing conventions employed by various writers/authors. Some of the elements that were looked at were style; tone or mood; development of ideas; theme; point of view; and kind of writing—descriptive, narrative, persuasive, and expository. They were also encouraged to look at the genre employed by the author to deliver his/her message to the reader(s). Through critical analysis of the conventions employed by the authors, the students were able to look at their own writing more critically. This enhanced the quality of their writing, as prior to the analysis they had been facing problems with their own writing. Having developed the ability to analyze several authors' works, and having become aware of writing conventions, my students were able to look critically at their own work as well as their peers'. As a result, they were able to improve the quality of their writing.

Genre

The study of writing conventions and the exploration of literature exposes students to the variety of genre that is available to them. Some of the genre that my students were introduced to during this course included picture books, fairy tales, folk tales, fantasy, realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, biography, and informational books.

The students were allowed to focus on the genre that they were individually most interested in or with which they dealt comfortably. Some of the students decided to write papers on themes that they had explored in a particular genre. One student wrote a thoughtful paper on the presentation of women in fairy tales. Her paper sought to refute the generally accepted image of women—as presented in fairy tales—as being weak and unable to fend for themselves. Another student looked at the destructive use of nuclear energy, after reading the powerful, chilling book, *Hiroshima No Pika*, by Toshi Maruki (1982). This book, in conjunction with Fredric Brown's short story, "The Weapon," caused some of the students to probe and to question the possibility of progress and development resulting in death and destruction. Others developed their research papers around the theme of the preservation of the environment.

Through their exposure to different forms of literature, the students learned about and developed an appreciation for different genre. They came to realize that each form or genre of literature has a definite purpose and message, and that its appeal depends on both the writer and the reader. They also learned that a message conveyed through a very simply written text is just as powerful as that presented through a scholarly treatise. Their reading of the science fiction genre led to the exploration of themes revolving around the search for other worlds; the conflict of cultures—based on little or no knowledge of the other; the potential of science; nuclear power; and the search for eternal life. Very often they realized that a marriage had occurred between the worlds of science fiction and fantasy, thus giving birth to powerful messages.

Cultural Analysis

Through a cultural analysis of the various books, the students learned to look at multiculturalism, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism. They were fairly quick to realize that the lack of understanding and knowledge about a particular people and their customs and traditions gives rise to stereotyping of a particular culture. Gilliland (1995) is of the view that children as well as adults feel that what is different can be interesting but it can also raise feelings of "contempt, fear, alienation, ridicule, boredom" (p. 105). In order to foster understanding of different customs, the book *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (Friedman, 1984), was introduced to them. This led to a discussion regarding the eating habits of cultures around the world. The book presents people's eating habits and traditions, while using different or the same utensils. It also helps us to understand that what is acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in another, but it does not make either custom wrong or better.

Laier, et al. (2001), view "multicultural literature [as] a powerful vehicle for teaching family and community values" (p. 64). Not only is it a vehicle to teach and uphold the values that are revered by a community but it also helps to develop an awareness and respect for others' values and customs. Citing Diamond and Moore (1995), they stress, "As students read multicultural books, they gain new insights into the values and beliefs of their own culture and the culture of others" (p. 64). Gilliland (1995) wrote "One of the most exciting things that is happening in children's literature is its exploration of various cultures here and around the world. More than ever, an understanding and respect for human diversity is vital not only to our well-being, but to our very survival. By learning about the lives of other people we gain tolerance, different perspectives on how we live our own lives, and new possibilities for dealing with old problems. And we increase our chances for peace" (p. 105). Gilliland's message is powerful and pertinent, especially in the aftermath of the world shattering incidents of September 11, 2001. The profiling of Middle Easterners and those of Arab origin, living in the United States, is very reminiscent of what the Japanese-Americans underwent during World War II. The discrimination felt by those who had Japanese ancestors is described in Sheila Hamanka's (1990) *The Journey: Japanese Americans, Racism, and Renewal*, and in Mochizuki's (1993) *Baseball Saved Us.* If we were to follow Gilliland's advice we would indeed learn to respect our own cultures as well as that of others', thus increasing the possibilities for peace.

Gilliland (1995) touches on various issues in her discussion on multicultural books, specifically the two she has written: *The Day of Ahmed's Secret* and *Sami and the Time of the Troubles*. She thinks of her two books as bringing the message of hope to the readers. Both her books, in their own way, celebrate "the strength of the human spirit" (p. 110). At the end of her discussion she states, "Sami and Ahmed come from very different worlds, different from each other's and probably very different from the world of the reader. Still, their humanity, I hope makes them almost familiar. We can identify with them. Their stories are worth hearing" (p. 112). These certainly appealed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to my students as they felt that someone in the west was sensitive to and sympathetic towards their part of the world.

Oppression is another theme that has been dealt with in children's literature. *Journey to Jo'burg* by Naidoo (1988) and *Kiss the Dust* by Laird (1992) reflect the oppression felt in South Africa during the apartheid. *Little Brother* by Bailie (1992) deals with forced labor camps in Cambodia. Stories that deal with refugees and how they were able to find havens for themselves and, in the process, were able to overcome the great odds facing them, restore our belief in humanity. Books dealing with multiculturalism, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism help the readers come to terms with opposing viewpoints and find ways in which to adapt their own views to accommodate those of others. Taxel (1995) states that "The call for multiculturalism in children's literature is a reaction to a central reality in the history of American children's literature: 'Until quite recently, people of color have been either virtually excluded from literature for young people, or frequently portrayed in undesirable ways—as negative stereotypes or objects of ridicule' (quoting Sims Bishop 1993, 39)" (p. 155).

As teachers/instructors, it is our job to create an environment for our students in which they will feel free to read, discuss, and write about the issues raised in children's literature. It is up to us to help overcome images presented negatively and to help students deal with issues that they have little or no knowledge of. Laier, et al. (2001, p. 65), citing Diamond and Moore (1993) present the following criteria in order to select multicultural literature:

1. Characters who authentically reflect the distinct cultural experiences, realities, and world view of a specific group.
2. Character representations portrayed in a true-to-life and balanced manner.
3. Settings representative of an environment consistent with a historical/contemporary time, place, or situation of the specific culture.
4. Themes developed within a story or selection that are consistent with the values and beliefs, customs and traditions, needs, and conflicts of the specific culture.
5. Informational literature presented in a detailed and accurate manner.
6. Language characteristic of the distinctive vocabulary, style, patterns, and rhythm of speech of the specific cultural group.
7. Literature that is free of stereotypes in language, illustrations, behavior, and character traits.
8. Language that reflects a sensibility to the people of the culture; offensive, negative, or degrading vocabulary in descriptions of characters, their customs, and lifestyles is absent.

9. Gender roles within the culture portrayed accurately and authentically reflecting the changing status and roles of women and men in many cultures . . . (pp. 44-46)

Another Point of View

Children's literature is an invaluable vehicle for providing another point of view. Readers, whether young or old, are presented with different points of view related to a particular issue. The issues concerned could deal with a social problem, a political problem, a problem related to war, a cultural concept, a gender-related issue. An example of different points of view related to the Second World War are the two books *Pearl Harbor Child* by Dorinda Makaonalani (1993), and *Hiroshima No Pika* by Toshi Maruki (1982). The former deals with the bombing of Pearl Harbor as seen through the eyes of a child, and the latter deals with the bombing of Hiroshima as seen through the eyes of a child. Both portray confusion, horror, and destruction—as seen by innocent beings. The messages conveyed are chilling and provided the stage for much discussion and formed the catalyst for research and subsequent writing. Several of my students were immensely affected by the story unfolding in *Hiroshima No Pika* by Toshi Maruki (1982) and wanted to find out about the policies and planning behind the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which then became the focus of their research.

Genres that lend themselves to presenting different points of view (though they may end up with similar messages) are that of the fairy tales and folk tales. One only has to read the variations of the Cinderella stories to realize that many cultures have their own versions of the story . . . yet, the message, by and large, is basically the same. I had shared the version of Cinderella set in Egypt, which delighted them considerably. Some writers who have taken the traditional fairy tales and have presented another point of view have tried to do so in the context of the current political and social state. Good examples of such interpretations and points of view are *The Paperbag Princess* by Munsch (1996) and *The Frog Prince . . . Continued* by Scieszka (1991). In these books the princesses are independent, strong, and, one could say, that they stand up for the rights of women. After reading these books, my students looked at gender issues as possible research topics—specifically, women's rights in Egypt. Some of them decided to research the birth of the feminist movement in Egypt and its progress or lack of, over the years.

Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality in children's literature was the most difficult to deal with in the EFL writing class. Most of the students have little or no background in literature, i.e., they have not read extensively, even in their own language. Therefore, to try to ask them to make connections or to refer to other pieces of literature, while reading a particular piece was exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Books often elude to characters or events from mythology, legends, the Arthurian legends, posing some sort of a problem in the students' processes of understanding and comprehending the text. So, in order to help overcome this lack, a number of titles were suggested for their reading.

A series of books that lend themselves to intertextuality beautifully are *Anno's Journey* (Anno, 1978), *Anno's U.S.A.* (Anno, 1982), and *Anno's Italy* (Anno, 1980). These books without words provide the sharp-eyed and sharp-witted reader or viewer references to various characters and incidents. Basically, these books are journeys of discovery, and the reader/viewer is invited to go along with the traveler and witness and experience all that he did. In *Anno's U.S.A.*, the reader/viewer finds allusion to various historical events and places, such as the Fur Traders Descending the Mission, the Old State House at Boston, the Alamo; reference to paintings by Winslow, Woods (the American Gothic), Whistler, Wyeth. Scenes from films such as *Gone With the Wind*, *She Wore Yellow Ribbons*, and *Shane*, make themselves evident. Characters from books such as *Charlotte's Web*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Little Women*, and *Tom Sawyer*, can be seen within the pages of the book.

Classroom Application

The inclusion of children's literature in my writing class led to lively discussions, exploration of various themes, concepts and ideas, culminating in my students' writing their research papers. The students, who had initially been negative about reading books "meant for children," developed an interest and, in some cases, a love for such books. Unfortunately, the limitation regarding the availability of such books is still valid, which might cause their interest in children's literature to be short lived. However, the main purpose of incorporating children's literature into my writing class was accomplished, as it led the students to explore several topics in order to write their papers.

My students were not only exposed to literature where, hitherto, they had had no experience with, but they were also exposed to themes and issues that were in some cases current and in others had generated interest. They explored issues that they had been hesitant to deal with; above all, they developed a greater appreciation and understanding of various cultures and the problems faced by people in cultures other than their own. One of my students wrote an incredibly insightful paper on Bosnia, and the plight of its people. Another student wrote a paper on the rebuilding of Lebanon, after its civil war. Still another wrote a paper on the abuse and hardships faced by children—this after reading some of Roald Dahl's books, as well as

Sleepers (Carcaterra, 1995). A couple of students felt the urge to delve into the issue of the misuse of nuclear power, especially after we had read *Hiroshima No Pika* (Toshi Maruki, 1982) and *Pearl Harbor Child* (Dorinda Makaonalani, 1993). They explored the theme of super powers exploiting their authority and power in order to intimidate and subjugate 'lesser nations'. One of the students wrote a paper on the role of women in fairy tales, and realized that not always were they passive and docile. Having been exposed to children's literature, my students set out on a journey of discovery to find topics related to or triggered by something they had just read and had found interesting and worth pursuing.

Reading the books and analyzing them for their purposes and messages helped my students to realize that they, too, needed to focus on the purpose and message in their own writing. After becoming aware of different cultures through children's literature, a few of my students felt that they needed to study their own culture's values and beliefs; while others decided to look at various cultures comparatively. Some of the students focused on a discussion of the prevalent superstitions, and others focused on traditions connected with marriage, while some explored traditional cuisine in the Arab world—the similarities and differences among selected Arab countries.

The Day of Ahmed's Secret (Gilliland, 1990) and *Sami and the Time of Troubles* (Gilliland, 1992) were interesting books for my students. As I pointed out previously, my students were touched to read books written by western authors who were not prejudiced against the Arabs. This caused them to be more open to books that were not in any way related to their lives or to the Arab world. They were able to read these books and absorb the messages that the different authors had to offer. They became aware of the anguish, despair, and hardships that people—whether young or old—go through under certain circumstances, and still retain feelings of strength and hope. They realized that as long as the human spirit is strong there is hope for a better world.

I found that children's literature was instrumental in helping my students develop responses to literature on a social dimension; it also assisted them in their cognitive and moral development. It made them explore and read about issues that they had not thought about previously and to look at the issues from several points of view. This exploration and reading led to their selection of interesting topics and writing papers on those topics. The introduction of children's literature proved to be an excellent catalyst for writing research papers in my writing course, and I feel that it has a definite potential for inclusion in writing classes at the tertiary level.

References

Carr, K. S., Buchanan, D. L., Wentz, J. B., Weiss, M. L., & Brant, K. J. (Oct. 2001). Not just for primary grades: A bibliography of picture books for secondary content teachers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 45*(2), 146-153.

Gilliland, J. H. (1995). Living in Sami's and Ahmed's worlds: Picture books explore children's lives in other countries. In S. Lehr (Ed.), *Battling dragons: Issues and controversy in children's literature* (pp. 105-112). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hunt, P. (1995). *Children's literature: An illustrated history.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taxel, Joel. (1995). Cultural politics and writing for young people. In S. Lehr (Ed.), *Battling dragons: Issues and controversy in children's literature* (pp. 155-161). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Laier, B. B., Edwards, P. A., McMillon, G. T., & Turner, J. D. (2001). Connecting home and school values through multicultural literature and family stories. In P. R. Schmidt & A. W. Pailliotet (Eds.), *Exploring values through literature, multimedia, and literacy events: Making connections* (pp. 64-74). Newark, DE: IRA.

Reference for Children's Literature

Anno, M. (1978). *Anno's Journey.* New York: Philomel Books.

Anno, M. (1982). *Anno's U.S.A.* New York: Philomel Books.

Anno, M. (1980). *Anno's Italy.* New York: Collins.

Bailie, A. (1992). *Little brother.* New York: Viking Press.

Carcaterra, L. (1995). *Sleepers.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Friedman, I. R. (1984). *How my parents learned to eat.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Gilliland, J. (1990). *The Day of Ahmed's secret.* New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shephard Books.

Gilliland, J. (1992). *Sami and the time of the troubles.* New York: Clarion Books.

Hamanka, S. (1990). *The journey: Japanese Americans, racism, renewal.* New York: Orchard Books.

Laird, E. (1992). *Kiss the dust.* New York: Dutton Children's Books.

Makaonalani, D. (1993). *Pearl Harbor child.* Hawaii: Arizona Memorial Museum Association.

Maruki, T. (1982). *Hiroshima no Pika.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shephard Books.

Mochizuki, K. (1993). *Baseball saved us.* New York: Scholastic.

Munsch, R. (1996). *The paperbag princess.* New York: Annick Press Ltd.

Naidoo, B., et al. (1988). *Journey to Jo'burg: A South African story.* New York: Harper Trophy.

Paterson, K. (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia.* New York: Dell.

Rowling, J. K. (1997). *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone.* Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

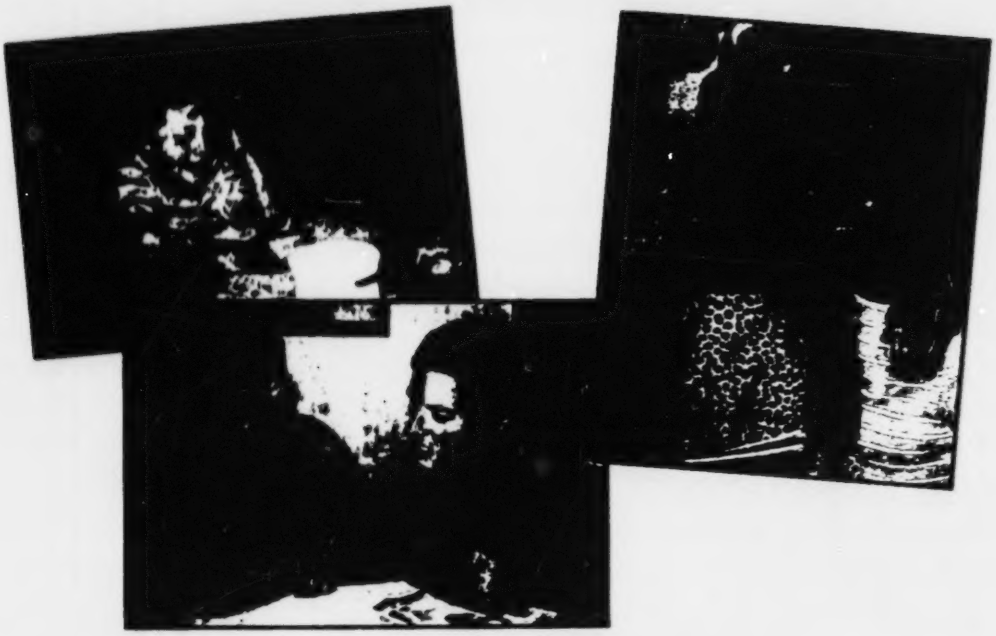
Rowling, J. K. (1998). *Harry Potter and the chamber of secrets.* Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

Rowling, J. K. (1999). *Harry Potter and the prisoner of Azkaban.* Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

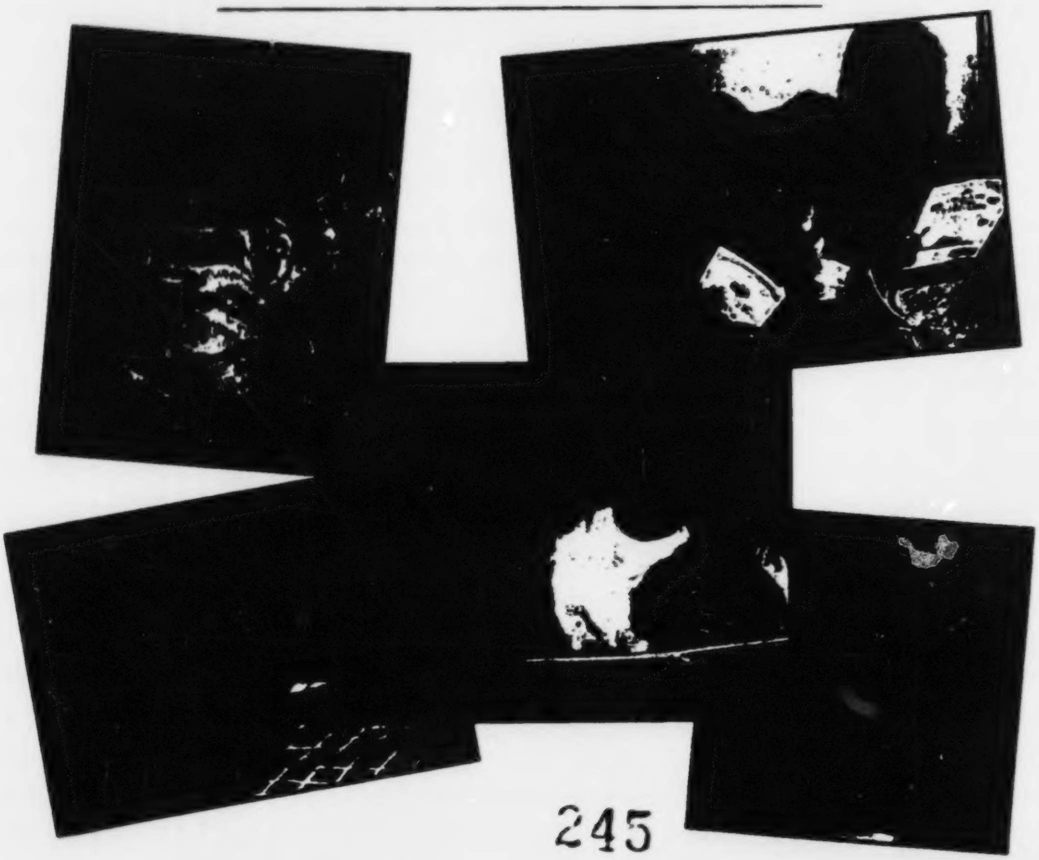
Rowling, J. K. (2000). *Harry Potter and the goblet of fire.* Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

Scieszka, J. (1991). *The frog prince . . . continued.* New York: Viking Press.

White, E. B. (1952). *Charlotte's Web.* New York: Harper and Row.



THE FACES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

USING PLAY AS A CONTEXT FOR CHILDREN'S ACQUISITION OF PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Nicole Regush
Catholic Public Schools of Vancouver

Jim Anderson
University of British Columbia

Elizabeth A. Lee
University of British Columbia

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to measure the effect of a short term, play-based program on kindergarten children's phonemic awareness. Comparison of pre and posttest mean scores on the Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Awareness revealed significant differences with the intervention group but not with the control group. Observations of selected children in the intervention group revealed a greater increase in the amount of literacy related play than was the case with selected children in the control group.

Interest in phonemic awareness as a component of early literacy teaching and learning has grown exponentially over the last decade or so. Defined as the understanding that spoken words are composed of smaller units of sound (Yopp, 1992), phonemic awareness allows children to analyze and/or manipulate units of speech, or phonemes. It is generally agreed that some level of phonemic awareness is necessary for children to begin to read an alphabetic language (Bradley & Bryant 1983, 1985; Malicky & Norman, 1999; Tunmer, Herriman, & Nesdale, 1988). While this ability has received much attention from researchers and theorists (e.g., Liberman, 1973) for the last thirty years or more, it has received relatively little attention in early literacy instruction until fairly recently. For example, as recently as a decade ago, two-thirds of kindergarten teachers believed that "the acquisition of the phonemic segmentation skill [was] not important to later reading success" (Troyer & Yopp, 1990).

A number of researchers using controlled conditions (e.g., Bradley & Bryant, 1985; Cunningham, 1990; Tunmer & Hoover, 1993) have demonstrated that phonemic awareness can be taught through explicit instruction over several months in small, teacher-led groups of one to five children of average literacy ability. But although phonemic awareness may be learned in isolation, it is only when connections are made explicit to children through instruction that phonemic awareness seems to generalize or transfer to literacy tasks resulting in positive effects on reading and writing achievement (Cunningham, 1990; Eldredge & Baird, 1996). A recent meta-analysis of phonemic awareness instruction concluded that such instruction makes a statistically significant contribution to reading acquisition (Ehri, Nunnes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Zadeh, & Shanahan, 2001).

Some educators (e.g. Chapman, 1999; Richgels & Poremba, 1996; Yopp & Yopp, 2000) question the developmental appropriateness of isolated skill instruction in phonemic awareness for 5 and 6-year-old children and call for developmentally appropriate instruction. Recently attention has turned toward evaluating a number of programs for teaching phonemic awareness and some researchers (e.g., Au, 2001) caution against a narrow approach. Richgels (2001), in his review of phonemic awareness materials, stresses that programs need to provide "teachers with adequate background information about phonemes and awareness and a number of other essential linguistic constructs—information that they need in order to be wise consumers of those programs and methods" (p. 274).

Play, "the work of the child", has received considerable attention in early childhood education. Recognizing the learning potential in a child's natural inclination to play, early childhood educators have typically incorporated learning centers into the kindergarten classroom. Imaginative play in which the child uses one object to represent another object promotes the growth of symbolic representation that is important for deciphering written language. In this study, it was hypothesized that modifying the learning centers so that a teacher could facilitate play that enhances phonemic awareness (Tudge & Rogoff, 1989), while allowing children to engage in free play at other times in literacy-rich learning centers, should lead to the development of symbolic competence and language usage required for literacy development (Pelligrini & Galda, 1993). Yopp and Yopp (2000) and others have suggested using rhymes and songs to develop children's phonemic awareness. However, there is a dearth of empirical research in using play in this regard.

Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory study was to develop and examine the potential of teacher supported play for enhancing the phonemic awareness development of kindergarten children.

Method

Participants

Thirty kindergarten children (11 females and 19 males) participated in this seven-week exploratory study conducted in May-June. The same teacher taught both classes (one morning, one afternoon) in the same classroom in a rural school. These classes were chosen because the teacher utilized free play as a regular feature of the curriculum. Both classes were composed of children from middle class homes and almost all were Caucasian and spoke English as their first language. Participants attended either a morning (intervention group) or an afternoon (comparison group) kindergarten class that was in session for two and one-half hours per day, Monday to Friday. Ten boys and six girls attended the intervention class while nine boys and five girls attended the comparison class. The mean age of children in the intervention class was 73.78 months and in the comparison class, 71.68 months, the age difference not being statistically significant. According to the teacher's records, at the commencement of the study, approximately 95% of the children in both classes could name all of the letters of the alphabet with all of the children being able to name at least half. The teacher also reported that very few of the children knew the letter-sound associations.

The classroom teacher held a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree and an additional two-year Bachelor of Education degree. She had taught for eight years. The same daily lesson plan was used in each class. Activities and methodologies were based on the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education for British Columbia and incorporated elements of science, language arts, social studies, art, math, religion, and physical education. Prior to the study, typical activities included free play in centers for twenty minutes daily, story time, and journal writing during which the teacher encouraged children to use invented spellings.

Before the commencement of the study, instruction in both classes was well established. The teacher took great care to ensure that the routines and the instruction were as similar as possible in both classrooms. Sessions lasted for two and one half hours and commenced with a circle time in which children participated informally in activities that explored the weather, calendar time in which the teacher introduced letter names, the names of the days of the week, and shared reading during which the teacher introduced new storybooks that became part of the classroom library. Group circle time was followed by a pencil and paper task. Children sat in groups of four at round tables and worked on picture-math activities, drew, did journal writing, or played a cooperative game such as alphabet bingo for about 20 minutes. Following this period, physical education, music, library, or French was scheduled for about 30 minutes with differing teachers on a rotating basis throughout the week. Clean up and a snack time that took about 30 minutes followed. A second circle time of about 20 minutes ensued. Here, the teacher and children explored science, social studies, religion, and language arts themes through stories, poems, chants, songs, and discussion. Free play at a variety of centers then took place for approximately 20 minutes before the clean-up song that began the preparation for going home.

It was during the second circle time that the researcher-led phonemic awareness instruction occurred in the intervention class for the seven weeks of the study. Otherwise, the routines and procedures just described remained the same for both classes.

During the second circle time in the comparison class for the duration of the study, the teacher and children worked on literacy activities including learning letter names, practicing letter formation, using puppets with letters on them, identifying isolated letter-sound relationships, learning letter chants, reading big books, and looking at alphabet books. In the intervention group, this second circle time was used to explore the phonemic awareness activities and knowledge. Thus the amount of time devoted to literacy was consistent across both groups. As well, the researcher and the teacher deliberately invited the children to further explore during free play the literacy activities that were a focus of the second circle time.

During the next twenty minutes, children of both classes were given the opportunity to play freely in the numerous centers that were already present for children of both classes. Both the intervention and the comparison groups both had equal opportunity and time for free play. It was during this free play period that the intervention group had the opportunity to use and explore the two new literacy centers: the office and the library.

Literacy tasks

The researcher administered each of the tasks to all of the children in both the comparison and the intervention classes. The two tasks were administered on separate days to each child individually. The administration of the tasks took place across two days prior to, and following, the intervention.

Phonemic awareness task. The Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation (Yopp, 1988) was administered to each child in both the intervention and the comparison classes as a pre and post assessment of phonemic awareness. It is designed to measure the child's ability to articulate the sounds of a word separately and in the correct order. This task requires approximately ten minutes to administer. The Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation has superior validity and reliability (Yopp, 1988) and displays a predictive correlation between phonemic awareness and subsequent rate of learning to read novel words.

Dictation Task. A Dictation Test, designed by S. Robinson and B. Watson (cited in Clay, 1985), was used to assess each participant's ability to transpose spoken sounds into written letters. This task was also administered by the researcher as a pre- and posttest assessment of the effect of transfer of phonemic awareness to spelling. It indicates a child's ability to use phonemic knowledge in conjunction with alphabetic knowledge to approximate conventional spelling. A sentence is dictated to the child in full, and then word-by-word, allowing time for the child to write. Credit is given for each phoneme that is represented in the same order that it is heard, even if the word is not spelled conventionally.

Observations. The classroom teacher identified one child at an early emergent literacy stage and one child at an advanced emergent literacy stage in each class for observation by the researcher. Criteria for selecting the children included their emerging knowledge of letter-sound relationships, letter recognition, and emergent reading and writing. Observations for the intervention group took place following the second circle time during free play. Detailed, hand-written observations were made during the free play across the seven weeks. Observations for the comparison group took place following second circle time during free play. Field notes documented behaviors, materials used, oral language communications, and interactions for both the comparison and intervention groups.

Since the researcher wanted to be able to capture as much as possible of the literacy activities of children during play, it was decided to focus on two children in each of the classes to capture as much information as possible. The researcher initially considered using a video tape but as a practicing classroom teacher felt that this method would be intrusive and possibly influence the children's behavior within the relatively short time period that was available for the study. Because the researcher wanted the play to be as authentic as possible and because the results of the study are not intended to be generalizable, she decided to observe a small number of children in-depth to determine if any trends would emerge. As the children were accustomed to having their teacher record observations throughout the day, the researcher's note taking during free play was not a novel occurrence.

Environment

Prior to the intervention, the classroom's physical arrangement consisted of many centers on the peripheral walls, including blocks, Legos™, a house, library, a writing center, and chalkboards. Large circular tables where children sat in fours were positioned in the center of the room. The writing center included literacy materials such as pencils, felt pens, envelopes, letter stamps, a variety of paper types and sizes, stickers, post-it notes, and so forth. Letters decorated the walls as well as labels such as "clock," "door," and "shelf." Newspapers and books were available, and cereal boxes were used in the "home" center.

During the study, two additional literacy centers (an office and a library) that were thematically linked to the phonemic awareness instruction were introduced in the intervention classroom. The office center and the library center duplicated the materials that were also available in the classroom writing center and the library center that had been in place prior to the study and were still available to all of the children in the comparison class and in the intervention class. Several of the activities available at these centers were introduced in the teacher-directed center.

Procedure

The researcher taught all phonemic awareness lessons in the intervention class. During this time, the classroom teacher was not involved in the instruction but took care of classroom routines and administrative matters. Each week the researcher introduced a different component of phonemic awareness in the following order; blending, initial sounds, terminal sounds, medial sounds, segmentation of two and three sound words, advanced segmentation with blends and diagraphs, and finally phoneme deletion. Phonemic awareness instruction that took place in the teacher-directed circle time was built on the imaginary story-life of a frog puppet named Pagami.

The frog's life generated a context for literacy play and it was hypothesized that this character would stimulate curiosity and draw children into interactive play that demonstrated the functionality of literacy activities while engaging children as they developed phonemic awareness. At no time were explicit verbal, explanatory connections made between written language and phonemic awareness. The frog puppet made reference to the child-directed centers, suggesting that they were replicas of the office and library in his town and asked children to use the resources there to help him with his various dilemmas. For example, Pagami had been given the "task" of sorting objects in his office one day according to beginning and final sounds. He had brought these items as an aid in helping explain his inability to do the job. The items were then left in the center for empathetic children to help him work on his problem if they so decided during free play.

The phonemic awareness instruction occurred on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the second circle time; on the other two days of the week the classroom teacher continued the regular routines that were described earlier. Each week, the phonemic component that was to be focused on during that week was presented in the followings format: Session 1-Monday: Story-Dilemma; Session 2-Wednesday: Song/Game; and Session 3-Friday: Literature/Writing Link.

Session 1 centered on story telling and involved a problem, which served to purposefully introduce a phonemic concept or to make connections with the previous week's sessions. The puppet frog orally recounted a personal experience involving him or neighbors. Through classic story structure involving a dilemma or problem, children would be drawn into the story, motivated to use phonemic knowledge and assist Pagami in solving his problem. For example, on one occasion, a mouse couple came to Pagami's office and requested that he redecorate their home, their children having grown up and left home. Being mice, they requested that all items purchased had to have the "ch" sound as in the first phoneme in "cheese."

Session 2 was based on a game or song designed to practice or experiment with the specific phonemic awareness component introduced in Session One. Although the frog was not present during the second and third sessions, the instruction was linked back to Session One and often children were questioned as to how Pagami would react or might think about not only the session itself, but also about events in classroom life. For example, the tune to "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" was used to sing "What is the sound in the middle of these words, 'bird' and 'girl' and 'shirt?" Yopp (1992) details several such songs.

Session 3 focused on the use of the knowledge in the context of written language. Stories, posters, newspapers, and poems were often read, or charts were made and discussed in the informal, researcher-led center. This session often concluded with a letter read aloud (written on chart paper) or a taped phone call from Pagami detailing a difficulty he had had that week at the office, at home or in his town that again required the children's input to resolve. The phonemic knowledge gained that week was essential for solving the week's dilemma. For example, during story time, the children would listen for a particular sound they had learned that week and were invited to raise their hand when they heard the sound.

The interactions with the frog-puppet drew the child into the play in the role of one who has authority and confidence as a knowledgeable literacy agent and problem solver. The frog seeking out the children's aid, as opposed to a teacher's, when he lacked the knowledge to solve phonemic-related problems further realized the plausibility of this play. Once the roles were defined, the play-interaction was sustained by the constant literacy dilemmas and problems that cropped up as the drama unfolded. In the child's mind, the interaction was simply play between peers. The learning and use of phonemic awareness strategies, however, were largely integrated into the play sequences because it seemed to the child to be logically embedded in the play.

Assessment and Scoring of Phonemic and Dictation Activities

The data from both the Yopp-Singer Test and the dictation activities were hand-scored. The phonemic segmentation activity consisted of two and three phoneme words. Children received credit only if all phonemes were represented in the correct order for a given word. For the dictation activity, children were given credit for every phoneme correctly represented, even where the word was not spelled conventionally. The dictation activity score gives an indication of the child's ability to analyze the word heard, and to represent the sounds as letters.

Results

Phonemic Awareness

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Ranges of Phonemic Awareness and Dictation Tasks

	Instructional Group			Comparison Group		
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range
Phonemic Pretest	7.81	7.48	22	6.93	5.62	18
Phonemic Posttest	15.69	6.11	19	9.86	5.08	15
Dictation Pretest	18.50	11.14	34	19.07	7.27	26
Dictation Posttest	22.56	9.79	30	21.86	7.46	27

Note: Maximum score for PHonemic Test = 22
Maximum score for Dictation Test = 37

To assess the effect of phonemic awareness instruction, the means of the intervention group and the comparison group were compared. The maximum possible score on the Phonemic Segmentation Test was 22. On this task, the intervention pretest mean score was 7.81, the comparison pretest mean score was 6.93. The intervention posttest mean score was 15.69, and the comparison posttest mean score was 9.86. As shown in Table 1, there was only a marginal difference of 0.88 between pretest mean scores of the intervention group and the comparison group. However, the post mean scores of the intervention group and the comparison group revealed a large difference of 5.83 in favor of the intervention group.

Looking at the growth in phonemic awareness of each of the groups over the seven weeks of the study revealed a mean gain score of 7.88 for the intervention group. On the other hand, the gain score for the comparison group over the seven weeks of the study was a more modest 2.93.

The Dictation Task

The maximum possible score on the Dictation Task was 37. As shown in Table 1, the intervention pretest mean score was 18.50; the comparison pretest mean score was 19.07. The intervention posttest mean score was 22.56, and the comparison posttest mean score was 21.86. As can be seen in Table 1, there is very little difference between the intervention group and the comparison group on the pretest and on the posttest on this task.

Incidence of Literacy-Related Free Play: Observational Field Notes

Literacy-related play was defined as behaviors that used literacy knowledge and strategies intermittently to facilitate a play sequence within another theme. For example, the house center was a favorite of several children who engaged in meal preparation there. One day when they ran out of several items necessary for the pretend-cooking, one of the children made a list by sounding out the word, writing the letters of the item on her list. *Literacy-dependent* play was defined as observations that centered on communication through the written word and took place across one or more minutes. For example, one of the favorite activities during free play was to write Pagami while he was away at his office.

As expected and as shown in Table 2, the intervention children chose literacy activities (literacy related and literacy dependent) more frequently than did the comparison children (73.5% to 23% of the total observations). Fifty-three percent of the intervention children's free play activities were literacy dependent as compared to 8% of those of the comparison children. Although within-group comparisons revealed that more advanced children chose literacy activities more frequently than their less advanced counterparts, between-group comparisons indicated that the less advanced intervention child chose literacy activities more than twice as often as the comparison more advanced child.

Observational analysis clearly indicates that children in the intervention group implemented phonemic strategies in eighty percent of the literacy-related free play (20/25 observations). Therefore, children in the intervention group were attempting to use phonemic knowledge during free play. Children in the comparison group who did not receive instruction were not observed to use such knowledge.

Discussion

The purpose of this action research study was to explore the effect of introducing phonemic awareness activities through modified learning centers on the development of phonemic awareness and emergent spelling within an existing kindergarten program. It was hypothesized that using modified learn-

Table 2. Chronological Representation of Children's Free Play Choices

	I-HL	C-HL	I-LL	C-LL
May 16	O	O	O	O
May 18	LD (ph)	O	O	O
May 20	LD (ph)	O	O	O
May 26	LD (ph)	O	LR (ph)	O
May 27	LD (ph)		O	
May 28	LD (ph)	LR	LD (ph)	LR
May 31	LD (ph)	O	O	O
June 2	O	LD	LD	O
June 4	LD (ph)	O	LR	O
June 7	LD (ph)	LR	LD (ph)	O
June 8	LD (ph)		LR	
June 10	LD		LR (ph)	
June 14	O		LR (ph)	
June 15	LD (ph)	O	LD (ph)	O
June 16	LD (ph)	LD	LR (ph)	O
June 17	LD (ph)	O	LD (ph)	O
June 18	LR	O	O	LR
Total Obs:	17	13	17	13
Literacy-Related	14 (82%)	4 (31%)	11 (65%)	2 (15%)
Other:	3	9	6	11
Phonemic Usage in Literacy Play	12/14 (86%)	0	8/11 (73%)	0

Note. LD = literacy dependent
LR = literacy related, but not the center of play
O = other; not related to literacy
(ph) = phonemic knowledge used during play

ing centers would capitalize on the advantages of both literacy rich environments and adult intervention, and would develop phonemic awareness and heighten kindergarten children's literacy-related behaviors during free play. Again, because of the exploratory nature of this research and the lack of randomization, the results of this study should be interpreted cautiously.

First, incorporating the adult-directed (i.e., researcher) learning center into the kindergarten classroom improved components of phonemic awareness including sound isolation, the ordering of sounds in words, and segmenting, as indicated by improved phonemic scores. Secondly, the phonemic awareness learned in the adult-directed learning center was transferred to, and used in the child-directed learning centers as indicated by the increased use of literacy activities and the inclusion of phonemic strategies during the majority of these play sequences. Third, although the intervention group achieved a higher level of phonemic awareness, this ability did not manifest in the Dictation Task. Given that instruction in symbol-sound relationship was not part of the intervention, this finding is not surprising. We speculate that with some instruction in symbol-sound relationships, these children will transfer this knowledge to their writing. We also concur with Malicky and Norman (1999), who stress the necessity of providing children with opportunities with a wide range of literacy activities in which they can apply newly constructed knowledge.

It should be noted that several children in the comparison class made some gains in phonemic awareness and two children in that group made large gains on the segmentation task. These scores increased from 7/22 and 4/22 to 15/22 for both children. The instruction in the comparison class such as the modeling of sounding out words when spelling may have influenced these results. In the intervention group, all of the children made gains, except for the one child who already had a perfect score on the phonemic awareness test. While the majority of the intervention children who scored low on the pre-test had markedly improved on the post-test, two children made small gains. Obviously, these children need follow-up and further attention.

Participant-Drama as a Motivational Strategy for Early-Literacy Learners

The familiar life of the frog-puppet, engaged children in literacy strategies in a meaningful format (Jensen, 1996). As the 'story' unfolded, many children enjoyed the opportunity to respond to the frog puppet's requests for assistance. We speculate that the manner in which the frog's dilemmas were presented encouraged participation by suggesting that each child was a literacy authority. This activity was also designed to affirm that group discussion and group problem solving are beneficial and promote cooperation and empathy.

Towards the end of the intervention, a trend seemed to be emerging which suggested that modified learning centers were of greatest benefit to the learners who were in the early stages of literacy acquisition. That is, the observational notes revealed that the intervention child who was at the early stages of literacy development increasingly engaged in literacy related play. This child also showed considerable gains on the phonemic awareness tasks.

Concluding Remarks

This study demonstrates that children's phonemic awareness can be enhanced through a fairly short-term intervention program that is developmentally appropriate and centered around play. With appropriate adult scaffolding and support, the children in the intervention group engaged in problem solving within a literacy context in cooperative and enthusiastic ways. Thus this study demonstrates that we can help children develop phonemic awareness in ways that are developmentally appropriate.

From this exploratory study, some interesting possibilities as to the role of play in helping children develop phonemic awareness have emerged. We believe that further research in different contexts is warranted.

References

Au, K. (2001). Reading Programs. *The Reading Teacher. 54,* 758-60.

Bradley, L., & Bryant, P. E. (1983). Categorizing sounds and learning to read: A causal connection. *Nature, 30,* 419-421.

Bradley, L., & Bryant, P. E. (1985). *Rhyme and reason in reading and spelling.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Chapman, M. (1999). Enhancing phonemic awareness in early literacy programs. *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, 7,* 405-409.

Clay, M. M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties.* Exeter, NH: Heinemann.

Cunningham, A. E. (1990). Explicit vs. implicit instruction in phonemic awareness. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 50,* 429-444.

Ehri, L. C., Nunes, S. R., Willows, D. M., Schuster, B. V., Yaghoub-Zadeh, Z., & Shanahan, T. (2001). Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36,* 250-287.

Eldredge, J., & Baird, J. (1996). Phonemic awareness training works better than whole language instruction for teaching first graders how to write. *Reading Research and Instruction, 35,* 193-208.

Jensen, E. (1996). *Brain-Based Learning.* Del Mar, CA: Turning Point Publishing.

Liberman, I. (1973). Segmentation of the spoken word and reading acquisition. *Bulletin of the Orton Society, 23,* 65-76.

Malicky, G., & Norman, C., (1999). Phonological awareness and reading. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 65,* 18-34.

Pellegrini, A., & Galda, L. (1993). Ten years after: A reexamination of symbolic play and literacy research. *Reading Research Quarterly, 28*(2), 162-175.

Richgels, D. J. (2001). Phonemic awareness. *The Reading Teacher, 55,* 274-278.

Richgels, D. J., & Poremba, K. J. (1996). Kindergarteners talk about print: Phonemic awareness in meaningful contexts. *The Reading Teacher, 49,* 632-643.

Troyer, S., & Yopp, H. (1990). Kindergarten teachers' knowledge of emergent literacy concepts. *Reading Improvement, 27,* 34-40.

Tudge, J., & Rogoff, B. (1989). Peer influences on cognitive development: Piagetian and Vygotskian perspectives. In M. Bornstein & J. Bruner (Eds.), *Interaction in human development (pp. 17-40).* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Tunmer, W., Herriman, M., & Nesdale, A., (1988). Metalinguistic abilities and beginning reading. *Reading Research Quarterly, 23,* 134-158.

Tunmer, W. E., & Hoover, W.A. (1993). Phonological recoding skill and beginning reading. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 5,* 161-179.

Yopp, R., & Yopp, H. (2000). Supporting phonemic awareness in the classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 54,* 130-143.

Yopp, H. (1988). The validity and reliability of phonemic awareness tests. *Reading Research Quarterly, 23,* 159-177.

Yopp, H. (1992). Developing phonemic awareness in young children. *The Reading Teacher, 45,* 696-703.

FAMILY STORIES IN K-3 CLASSROOMS: PROMOTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION

Julie K. Kidd
Eva K. Thorp
Sylvia Y. Sánchez

George Mason University

Abstract

Family story projects, in which students gather and share stories that feature family members, provide early elementary students with opportunities to explore and develop language and literacy in meaningful and relevant ways and enable teachers, students, and families to learn from and about each other. This paper describes a family stories project initiated in an early childhood preservice teacher preparation program involving 16 teaching interns in 4 culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse schools and reports the results of a questionnaire administered that examined the interns' perceptions of the impact the project had on their understanding of and work with diverse children and their families. The results indicate that the interns perceived that the family stories project enhanced their work with diverse students and families and their understanding of the students' language and literacy development by enabling them to link classroom curriculum with the experiences of their students' families.

One of the main goals in our teacher education program is to prepare preservice teachers to work effectively and successfully with culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families. We recognize the great responsibility that comes with helping our students realize this goal, and therefore, spend a considerable amount of time and effort taking a critical look at the experiences we provide our students and the assignments we require they undertake. We are committed to providing a program that goes beyond the one-time class sessions and workshops that often encourage teachers to maintain a Eurocentric view that perpetuates the values and perspectives of the white middle class (Goodwin, 1997). We feel compelled, as Ladson-Billings (1999) suggests, to offer a teacher education program that includes "a global curriculum, an appreciation of diversity, a belief in the value of cooperation, and a belief in a caring community" (p. 226).

Although there are myriad approaches recommended for meeting this goal (Wiggins & Follo, 1999), we believe that one in which course work and field experiences in diverse classrooms are linked is essential to maximizing the effects of what is learned and what is practiced. It is also important that these experiences provide opportunities for preservice teachers to develop an understanding of and a respect for the diverse students and families with whom they work. For these reasons, we make a concerted effort to provide experiences and assignments that encourage preservice teachers to interact with children and their families and become familiar with their culture, values, and goals. One way we attempt to reach this goal is through a sequence of linked assignments that enable students to learn from families and their stories and to use these stories to inform curriculum. In this article, we describe the family stories project our preservice teachers implement during their full-time internship in a kindergarten through third-grade field placement.

Theoretical Framework

Incorporating family stories, defined by Buchoff (1995) as "narratives in which the youngster or other relatives are the featured characters in simple home adventures of days gone by" (p. 230), into the curriculum creates opportunities for preservice teachers to learn about the diversity in their classrooms and to gain greater understandings of how to best build on their students' strengths and meet their students' needs. Stories "are an important tool for proclaiming ourselves as cultural beings" (Dyson & Geneshi, 1994) and provide a means for representing our lives (Bruner, 1996). As students share their stories, teachers gain insights into their students' worlds (Edwards & Pleasants, 1999). These stories provide opportunities for understanding families' "cultural values, themes, and norms, as well as roles, concepts, skills, rituals and practices, information, folklore, and history, all of which are needed to enhance the younger generation's well-being" (Sánchez, 1999, p. 352). By listening to the stories of students and their families, teachers gain an understanding of the cultural context in which their students live.

Research has shown that family culture plays a critical role in children's language and literacy development and influences how children best learn to read and write (Au & Mason, 1983; Delpit, 1995; Edwards & Pleasants, 1999; Heath, 1982). Therefore, it is essential that teachers develop an awareness of the cultural identities of their students and use this knowledge to provide instruction that is responsive to students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Edwards and Pleasants (1999) warn "that adopting a color-blind attitude toward students is not the answer to becoming culturally responsive literacy teachers" (p. 99). Likewise, they caution against incorporating activities that simplify culture by focusing solely on the food, clothing, or artwork of particular cultures. Such approaches tend to ignore the differences among students and perpetuate middle-class values and beliefs. Instead, Nieto (2002) suggests "that teachers need to respect students' identities and they need to learn about their students if they are to be effective with them" (p. 19).

Incorporating family stories into the curriculum provides teachers and students with opportunities to learn more about each other and develop relationships that facilitate an awareness of and respect for individual differences. Students benefit because the family stories serve as a way to validate and support home languages, literacies, and cultures. This is especially important for students not of the dominant culture because "frequently, the books students read at school are about people who are not like them and therefore neither support nor validate their identities" (McCaleb, 1997, p. 49). Family stories, however, serve as a vehicle for students and their families to share the values and ideas that are important to them (Gay, 2000). Students' own communication styles, language and literacy traditions and practices, lifestyles, and beliefs are supported, validated, and celebrated as stories are shared within the classroom.

Encouraging students to gather family stories and share them with their classmates can also enhance student learning. Through family stories, language and literacy development is fostered (Thorp, 1997). Dyson and Genishi (1994) explain, "Just as new language and experiences enter the classroom through children's stories, children themselves gain opportunities to try on the language and experiences of others, to infuse themselves into new ways with words" (p. 5). Students have the opportunity to play with and experience language and literacy in meaningful contexts. Stories provide opportunities for literacy to be developed as connections are made to students' real lives (Nieto, 2002). Teachers, students, and families have an opportunity to learn from and about each other as stories are shared and insights are gained. Additionally, McCaleb (1997) explains:

> When human beings are presented with the possibility of writing about their world in the way they see it and describe their experiences as they live them, they become more involved in their own learning and are better equipped to transform their own lives. (pp. 48-49)

By providing opportunities for students and their families to write and share their own stories, teachers promote student learning and foster language and literacy development while at the same time support and validate students' cultural identities.

We believe that the implementation of family stories projects in kindergarten through third-grade internships can serve as a powerful tool for assisting preservice teachers in their understanding of and work with diverse young children. Because little is known about how preservice teachers perceive their participation in family stories projects, we have been interested in exploring and documenting our graduate students' engagement in a series of projects to help them better understand the experience of diverse families and to use those stories in implementing curriculum. Prior results of a previous study indicated the many ways in which collecting family stories had influenced preservice interns' views of families (Kidd, Sánchez, & Thorp, 2002). What we did not know was how students were able to use what they learned from families to inform curriculum (Kidd et al., 2002).

This study focuses on a newly constructed assignment in which interns were asked to implement projects where early elementary students gathered and shared stories about themselves and their families. During this initial year, which served as a pilot study, we were interested in examining our students' (referred to as interns throughout the study) perceptions of the impact of the family stories projects on their cultural understandings and work with diverse students and their families. Therefore, the predominant research question was the following: How did implementing family stories projects contribute to interns (a) ability to implement culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, (b) understanding of language and literacy development, and (c) understanding of and work with diverse learners? This was the first year in which students had not only collected a family story in the prior semester, but were also asked to use family stories in a project-based unit of study. Therefore, we were interested in seeing not only what the students reported to be the influence, but how they actually carried out a project based on family stories.

Method

Participants and Setting

The Early Childhood UTEEM (Unified Transformative Early Education Model) program, is a full-time, early childhood (birth to age eight), triple licensure program at a state university in the Washington DC metropolitan area. In this initial study, 16 teaching interns involved in UTEEM implemented family stories projects as they worked with diverse children in kindergarten through third-grade internships in four culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse elementary schools in two surrounding school districts. Approximately 63% of the interns stated they were White, 19% identified themselves as Hispanic, and 19% indicated they were Asian.

At the time of the study, the interns were enrolled in the third semester of their two-year program. The focus of this semester was on kindergarten through third-grade classroom teaching. Previous semesters focused on working with infants and toddlers and teaching preschool students. During the third semester, the interns attended classes four days a week and visited their internship sites on a weekly basis prior to their full-time internships that started at the end of October and continued until the beginning of December.

Procedures

In the semester prior to this one, interns had completed several assignments related to family stories, including gathering a family story from a family of a child with whom they worked who was from a culture other than their own. The focus of that semester was on learning from families and on strategies for learning family stories. In their curriculum class, interns gained an understanding about the power of family stories and the link between family stories and identity and culture. The perceived impact of this assignment has been reported elsewhere (Kidd et al., 2002).

During this semester, the focus of the curriculum class was on using family stories to inform culturally responsive curriculum. This work was influenced by the work of Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992), McCaleb, (1997), and Dyson and Genishi (1994). Through readings and class discussions, the interns explored the power of children gathering and sharing their family stories and examined various ways to link family stories to the existing curriculum at their internship sites. A major assignment for the curriculum class entailed implementing a family stories project during their full-time internships. The interns were instructed to develop a project that would build upon the children's interests and family stories while at the same time meet curriculum standards mandated by the state. The requirements for the project were broad enough to enable the interns to plan and implement a project that met the needs and interests of their students. At the same time the interns were planning for their family stories projects, they were learning about children's writing and the writing process in their language and literacy course and were engaged in writing personal narratives using strategies early elementary students might utilize.

At the beginning of their full-time internship, the interns met with their cooperating teachers to discuss ways they could incorporate a family stories project into the existing curriculum. The ways the interns chose to integrate the project into their teaching varied greatly. One intern decided to build upon children's natural interest in food and designed a project that would involve students in sharing stories about the types of food they eat at home. She encouraged family members to visit the classroom and share samples and stories of their favorite foods. When one student was reluctant to have her mother participate because her mother spoke only the home language, the intern invited her own mother who was predominantly Spanish-speaking to share some of her family's favorite dishes and stories. Although the intern's mother used only Spanish in her presentation, the students expressed delight in meeting the intern's mother.

After her successful visit, the student who had indicated embarrassment and reluctance because her mother did not speak English volunteered to bring her mother to demonstrate a cooking lesson. The intern called the mother to further encourage her participation and demonstrate support for the child's invitation. Until this event, the mother shared that she had never participated in a school activity. Her cooking activity was a success. The children measured the ingredients, read labels in English and Spanish, discussed the origin of the dish, heard stories about how the mother and her daughter learned to cook the dish, and finally ate the food. All the children interacted warmly, respectfully, and willingly with the mother. Her daughter beamed with obvious pride at seeing her mother as the center of her classmates' attention.

The culminating project was a cookbook that included recipes and stories from each student's family. After compiling the cookbook, it was copied and sent for each family to enjoy. During the presentation to her peers, the intern indicated that this experience helped her realize how important it is for children to feel that teachers value their home language.

Another intern was required to integrate the family stories project into the economics unit that was the focus of her social studies instruction. She called her project "Tools of the Trade." Families were invited to class to share the tools that helped them earn a living. They told stories about how they learned their skill, demonstrated how to use their tools, and described or brought some of the products they help produce. Many of the stories shared were immigration stories involving separation and reunification of families, meeting financial obligations across countries, coping with cross cultural communication issues, and using oral and written literacy activities to keep the family connected across borders. As students gathered and shared their stories, the intern helped them make connections between the content of the state-mandated social studies standards and the children's own lives. Through the stories, she addressed topics such as human resources, goods and services, and the exchange of money. The students' final products were books with photographs that included stories students gathered from family members about their work and the ways they contributed to the economic well being of their families.

Although the implementation of the family stories projects differed from intern to intern, all interns designed projects that (a) encouraged students to gather and share stories about themselves and their families, (b) integrated the family stories with the classroom curriculum, and (c) provided students with opportunities to use and experiment with language and literacy. At the end of the semester, the interns shared their students' products with their classmates and discussed insights gathered from the experience. The projects deemed most successful by the faculty were those that were most congruent with the perspective of Moll et al. (1992) in which students truly accessed the "fund of knowledge" of the children and families with whom they were working. In that way, they brought the voice of often-disenfranchised families into the classroom. At the conclusion of the project, the interns responded to open-ended questions on a questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire administered to the interns at the conclusion of the family stories project tapped the interns' perceptions of the impact implementing the family stories project had on their understanding of and ability to work with diverse learners. In addition, it elicited responses about the interns' perceptions of the effect of the project on their understanding of language and literacy development. Data consisted of responses to open-ended questions. We also took field notes as the interns presented and discussed their projects. These notes enabled us to document the types of projects that emerged from the assignment and gave us a sense of the stories the children and families shared.

We analyzed the data qualitatively using constant comparison analysis based in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Through this analysis, we were able to inductively develop themes as we interacted with the data (Maxwell, 1996). As suggested by Fowler (1988), we listed the responses to the open-ended questions, highlighted the key ideas, and coded each response based on the themes that emerged. Each of us reviewed the list independently and identified the categories that emerged. We then met to compare our categories and come to a consensus on any that differed. Once we established the categories based on the themes that emerged, we coded the responses independently. After coding the responses, we met once again to discuss our coding and to come to an agreement on any responses coded differently. We then established an analytical framework for relating the relevance of the findings by determining the overarching themes reported below (Silverman, 2000).

Results

State Standards and Culturally Responsive Curriculum

One theme that emerged was that the interns perceived that the family stories project gave them an opportunity to implement experiences that were responsive to the needs and backgrounds of the students and still met the requirements of the state-mandated curriculum. Specifically, they felt they were able to link the family stories project to the Standards of Learning (SOLs) required by the state. One intern stated, "I felt the project did not steer away from the SOLs, and the project was doable." Another agreed, "I was able to tie family stories in very easily with the standards that had to be taught." One explained that she was able to link the project to standards related to "community and language/literacy." Whereas, another was able to integrate the project with her social studies instruction: "I was asked that the project be tied in with an economics unit, and it turned out really well."

To provide instruction that would be culturally responsive, some interns focused on how to link families with the required curriculum and then decided on a direction for their projects. One intern explained, "I began considering how I could connect with families and their experiences within a mandated unit of study." Another stated, "It helped me to see all of the different ways in which families can be a part of all curriculum areas. Also, it showed me ways to incorporate my ideas and still teach the SOLs."

Other interns indicated they felt the project served as a reminder that when developing curriculum, the students should be the focus of their curriculum development and took an approach to planning and instruction that focused more intensely on the students and their families instead of the curricular mandates. One intern noted, "First and foremost, looking at the interest of the children guided my family stories project." Another explained, "It [the family stories project] taught me to work at how I am teaching, how the children are reacting and try to incorporate the children in the teaching/learning experiences." One intern concluded, "I learned what was important to the children and their families, and then I used that information to guide the curriculum."

High Quality Writing Outcomes

It was also the interns' perception that the family stories project contributed to their understanding of language and literacy development. They felt that it enhanced their understanding of the children's writing and the effect of motivation on children's writing. Several of the interns indicated that the family stories gave them insight on the varying levels of their students' writing. One explained, "The stories that the children wrote about their communities illustrated the variety of literacy development in my class." Another elaborated, "The children were encouraged to draw or write about what was important/special about their families. Through these activities, I saw the levels of development that the children were at."

Others like this intern were impressed by what the students were able to do: "My project required a great deal of writing, and I was amazed at the depth and quality of the writing I received. Even students who have writing difficulties did a great job." Another attributed the impressive results to students being engaged in a meaningful and interesting experience: "I was able to see how the children responded and wrote more when they were really interested—when the experience was meaningful." Another concluded, "The children were motivated to read the written products that they brought in themselves with little or no help from me, which impressed me a lot. Motivation/engage[ment] is the key."

A few interns indicated that the family stories project affected their use of culturally relevant text in the classroom. One intern "tied in books that were relevant to families and differences in culture" and "then had students describe stories and share their ideas." Another explained, "It taught me that incorporating a variety of literature (from cultures, genres, etc.) is very important. Including the values of the classroom in the literature is essential."

The interns also seemed to feel that the project enabled them to integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Several interns discussed their ability to integrate the language arts through family stories. One intern stated, "I was able to get students who normally do not speak out in class to share and vocalize their projects." Another remarked, "It allowed me to see how the children wrote at home since my project was mainly done outside in the home. Also, [the family stories] allowed me to observe the children's language skills through sharing." One intern summed up the ability to integrate the language arts by stating the following:

> "Based on the idea of co-authorship, implementing this project afforded me the opportunity to address the issues of oral language (through sharing with the class), reading (using written stories as a reference, in the library, to read for enjoyment), and writing (actually recording the stories). My project was, then, a three-fold process that built on developing language and literacy."

Uniqueness of Family Experiences

Another theme that emerged was that the interns perceived that their participation in the family stories project influenced their work with diverse children and their families because it gave them insight into the diverse lives of their students. One intern explained, "It gave me a little insight into what makes the families unique, interesting, and diverse." Another "realized that every family has different experiences and cultures." And one concluded, "Everyone's story is important. Stories provide a snapshot of that family only."

One intern summed up the impact by stating, "The project I did provided a lot of insight into my students' lives. Some of the books [they made with their families] let me see where some of the children come from and how they are influenced by culture." The interns' understanding of the uniqueness of each family was evident in their responses.

Other interns focused more on the children and noted the individuality of the students. They indicated that the project helped them realize the importance of knowing their students well. One intern stated, "It taught me that I really have to get to know the children as well as I can to be able to implement an effective project." Another seemed to be fascinated by the various approaches her students took to the project and noted, "I was able to see all of the different directions in which the different children took the assignment." One intern summarized the experience by reflecting,

"I was initially hesitant about implementing it [the family stories project] with grade three because I was unsure that I could make it work. However, I learned such a great deal about each of my students and how they learn best that I would do it again in a heartbeat."

Discussion and Implications

One of our purposes for studying our students' perceptions of the impact of the family stories project was to help us determine whether adding this explicit assignment to an ongoing set of assignments related to family stories contributed to reaching our goal of preparing teachers who feel comfortable and confident working with the culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students prevalent in schools today and who are able to welcome families into those schools. We were curious about whether these preservice teachers would realize that it is possible to provide instructional experiences that support and validate the languages and literacies of home cultures while at the same time address state-mandated standards and curriculum. We wanted to know if our graduate students would recognize the importance of family and home culture when teaching early elementary students and would figure out how to draw from the vast experiences of these families to focus on enhancing students' language and literacy development. And finally, we hoped to learn from our students how to shape our future investigations in order to delve deeper into the power of family stories.

It is apparent to us that engaging preservice teachers in family stories projects during their full-time internships in early elementary classrooms holds many exciting possibilities. They are in terms of preparing teachers who appreciate and support the diversity within their classrooms and have the knowledge and attitudes necessary to enhance language and literacy development by supporting and validating the home languages and literacies of their students. Although this study is limited by the sample size and the administration of a single questionnaire, we feel the results are worth examining and sharing as a way to encourage others to think about the possibilities inherent in family stories. They also serve as a vehicle for exploring how family stories not only support and validate the home languages and literacies of the children but also support classroom curriculum, including the development of language and literacy. As a pilot study, the results will also assist us as we determine future directions for our program as well as for our research.

As we reviewed and analyzed the results, we noted several themes that emerged that shed light on the potential impact of family stories and provide guidance for future explorations. First, the results of the questionnaire suggest that it is possible to incorporate family stories into instruction and at the same time meet state-mandated standards and curricular requirements. Because family stories projects enable teachers to make links between the curriculum and the home and help teachers build upon families' funds of knowledge, the curriculum is enriched and the classroom is transformed into a community of learners where students, teachers, and families learn from each other (Thorp, 1997).

Many of the interns seemed excited about the possibility of meeting the academic requirements while at the same time providing an educational experience they knew valued, supported, and built upon the children's home cultures and experiences. Some interns worked toward their goals by examining the required curriculum and then searching for ways to make connections to students and their families. Whereas, other interns felt it was important to start with children and families first and use family experiences to guide curricular decisions. The interns found that whether they focused first on the required curriculum or whether they followed the interests of their students, they were able to make connections to the Virginia Standards of Learning. For example, the interns who worked with second-grade students found they were able to use family stories to meet English standards such as the following: "The student will write stories, letters, and simple explanations" (Board of Education, 1995, p. 6). In the same project, they might also address the following social studies objective: "The student will compare rural, urban, and suburban communities and describe how the local community has changed physically and demographically over time" (Board of Education, 1995, p. 8).

Although the interns addressed different standards and varied greatly in their implementation of the family stories project, the common thread among the approaches the interns took was the realization that "parents come with rich histories and experiences that should be honored and used in program development" (Neuman, Caperelli, & Kee, 1998, p. 250). Although Neuman et al. (1998) were referring to the development of family literacy programs, the interns applied similar thinking as they, in the words of one intern, "learned what was important to the children and their families" and then used "that information to guide the curriculum." It was apparent through their responses that this project gave them an opportunity to realize the importance of developing curriculum that built upon the rich experiences of the children and their families.

Another finding that appeared to be consistent across the interns was they perceived that incorporating family stories into the curriculum contributed to their understanding of children's language and literacy development, especially in writing but also in oral language. The interns seemed fascinated by the amount and quality of the writing the students were doing and appeared pleased they were able to integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking into the project. We were encouraged by their realizations that motivation and interest play key roles in the engagement of students and ultimately in their success with reading (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). It was interesting to see that some interns transferred their understandings of the importance of validating and celebrating home cultures to their selection of text and their incorporation of family-relevant children's literature into their classrooms.

We were also intrigued by the insights they said they gained about the children and their families and want to know more about what they did with their new understandings. It is apparent from their responses they felt family stories helped them learn about the lives of their diverse students. They hinted that it helped them see the need to look at each and every family individually in order to avoid generalizations about cultural groups. There was also an indication that family stories helped them recognize the uniqueness of each student and the different ways students can approach a similar assignment. What is not clear in the interns' responses is whether they were able to use what they learned to "analyze the curriculum for cultural/linguistic/family relevance" (Thorp, 1997, p. 267) and how their realizations reflected upon their past instruction and will influence their future decisions and actions. Therefore, it is our desire to delve deeper into the power of family stories to determine not only what preservice teachers learn from the experience of implementing family stories projects in early childhood settings, but to also gain insight into how family stories contribute to preservice teachers' understanding of and respect for diverse children and their families and ultimately to their instructional decisions.

Conclusions

We are encouraged by the potential role family stories play in preparing preservice teachers to value diversity, to draw upon the experiences of families to plan and implement curriculum and instruction, and to understand aspects of their students' language and literacy development. It was apparent in our study that incorporating family stories projects into the interns' early childhood internships contributed to their understanding of diverse cultures and families and helped them link classroom curriculum to their students' lives in a meaningful manner. It was also evident that the interns felt they learned about their students' language and literacy development as they listened to the oral stories and examined the written narratives. As our interns interact with children and their families and plan for instruction, it is our hope that they will continue to view families as a source of valuable knowledge and will use this knowledge to inform their curricular decisions as well as shape their interactions with diverse children and their families.

References

Au, K., & Mason, J. M. (1983). Cultural congruence in classroom participation structures: Achieving a balance of rights. *Discourse Processes, 6*(2), 145-167.

Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia. (1995). *Standards of learning for Virginia public schools.* Richmond, VA: Author.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Buchoff, R. (1995). Family stories. *The Reading Teacher, 49*, 230-233.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom.* New York: The New Press.

Dyson, A. H., & Genishi, C. (1994). How can we provide for culturally responsive instruction in literacy? In A. H. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.), *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community* (pp. 1-7). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Edwards, P. A., & Pleasants, H. M. (1998). How can we provide for culturally responsive instruction in literacy? In S. B. Neuman & K. A. Roskos (Eds.), *Children achieving: Best practices in early literacy* (pp. 98-120). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Fowler, F. J. (1988). *Survey research methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Gambrell, L. B., Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Mazzoni, S. A. (1996). Assessing motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher, 49*, 518-533.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Goodwin, A. L. (1997). Historical and contemporary perspectives on multicultural teacher education. In J. King, E. Hollins, & W. Hayman (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for cultural diversity* (pp. 5-22). New York: College Teachers Press.

Heath, S. B. (1982). Questioning at home and school: A comparative study. In G.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Kidd, J. K., Sánchez, S. Y., & Thorp, E. K. (in press). A focus on family stories: Enhancing preservice teachers' cultural awareness. *National Reading Conference Yearbook 51*.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1999). Preparing teachers for diverse student populations: A critical race theory perspective. In A. Iran-Nejad & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 211-247. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCaleb, S. P. (1997). *Building communities of learners*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: A qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, 31*, 132-141.

Neuman, S. B., Caperelli, B. J., & Kee, C. (1998). Literacy learning, a family matter. *The Reading Teacher, 52*, 244-252.

Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Sánchez, S. Y. (1999). Learning from the stories of culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities. *Remedial and Special Education, 20*, 351-359.

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thorp, E. K. (1997). Increasing opportunities for partnership with culturally and linguistically diverse families. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 32*, 261-269.

Wiggins, R. A., & Follow, E. J. (1999). Development of knowledge, attitudes, and commitment to teach diverse student populations. *Journal of Teacher Education, 50*(2), 94-105.

Appendix A.

ID Code (Last four digits of SS#): ________

Family Stories K-3 Project
Post-Questionnaire, Fall 2000

Please respond to the following questions. Use the back if needed.

1. How did your family stories project contribute to your understanding of diverse learners?
2. How did your family stories project assist you in implementing curriculum?
3. How did your family stories project impact your understanding of language and literacy development?
4. What was easy about implementing the family stories project?
5. What was difficult about implementing the project?
6. How did the family stories project help you understand your own family stories?
7. In what way did the family stories project from the infant and toddler semester help you implement the family stories project?

College Reading Association
John E. Bertrand
851 Lassiter Barker Rd.
Readyville, TN 37149

ISBN 1-883604-30-3

274

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

EFF-089 (1/2003)